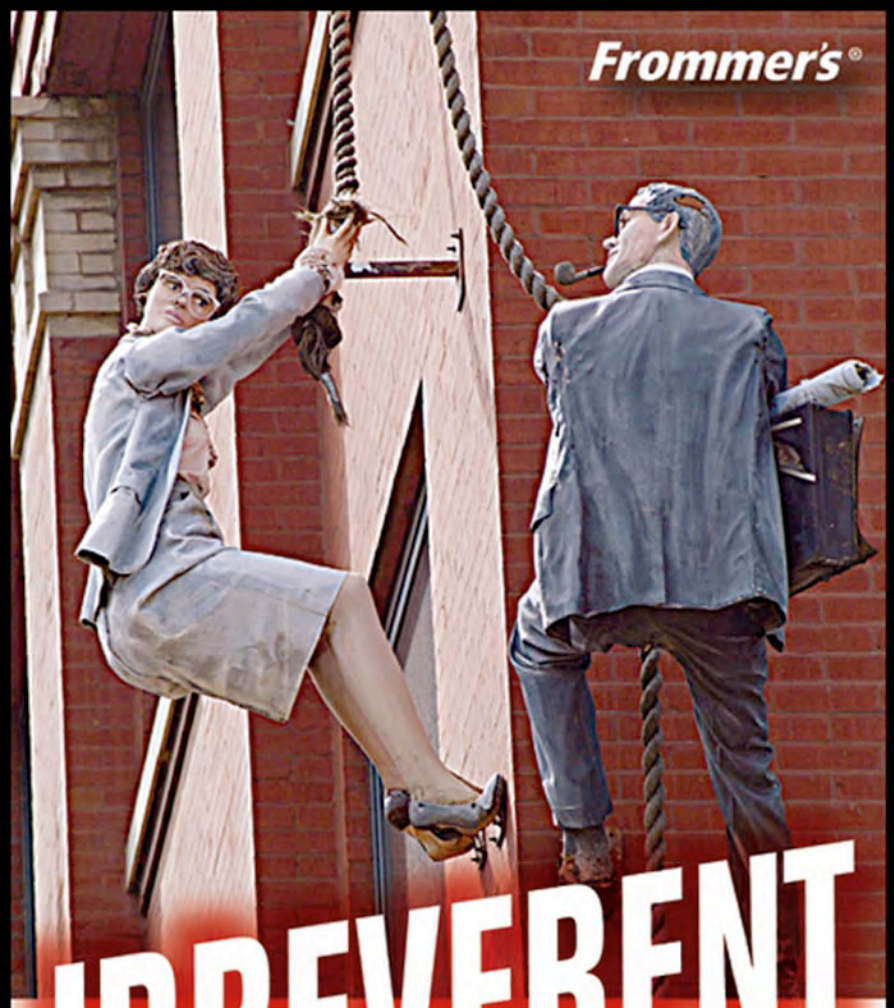

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5th Edition

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Elizabeth Canning Blackwell

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Thanks to Lisa Lebowicz—I couldn't have done this without you.

About the Author

Elizabeth Canning Blackwell began life on the East Coast, but 4 years at Northwestern University transformed her into a Midwesterner. She has worked as a writer and editor at *Encyclopedia Britannica,* Northwestern University Medical School, the *Chicago Tribune,* and *North Shore,* a lifestyle magazine for the Chicago suburbs. She also has written for national magazines on everything from planning the perfect wedding to fighting a duel. She lives just outside the city with her husband, daughter, and an extensive collection of long underwear.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

Maps

Map 1 Chicago & Neighborhoods 6

YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW 7

Why do they call Chicago the Second City? (7) • Why do they call it the Windy City? (7) • What is "the Loop"? (8) • So why does the Loop seem so empty in the winter? (8) • What's so magnificent about the Magnificent Mile? (8) • Does size really matter? (9) • Chicago in the movies, part 1—downtown (9) • Does Chicago really have more Polish people than anywhere save Warsaw? (9) • How can I sound like a real Chicagoan? (10) • Is Michael Jordan still a Chicago icon? (10) • Well, I brought my car—now where am I going to park it? (10) • Where can I hear music for free? (10) • Can I go to the opera and the symphony when I'm in town? (11) • What if I gotta go? (11)

1 ACCOMMODATIONS 12

Basic Stuff 16

Winning the Reservations Game 17

Is There a Right Address? 18

The Lowdown 18

Big bucks de luxe (18) • Chicago classics (19) • A home away from home (20) • Best views (20) • Chicago in the movies, part 2—the neighborhoods (21) • Gold Coasters (21) • New kids on the block (22) • If everyone else stays on Michigan Avenue, I don't want to (22) • Style and substance (23) • Lobbies to die for (23) • Family values (24) • For lovers and those who want to be (24) • Suite deals (25)

• *Mega-hotels for conventioneers (25)* • *Taking care of business (26)* • *Gym dandies (27)* • *Cheap sleeps (27)* • *Oh so near O'Hare (28)*

Maps

Map 2 Chicago Accommodations 14
Map 3 Magnificent Mile & River North Accommodations 29
Map 4 The Loop Accommodations 30

The Index **31**
An A to Z list of places to stay, with vital statistics

2 DINING **44**

Basic Stuff **48**
Getting the Right Table 48

The Lowdown **48**
Institutions (48) • *See-and-be-scenes (49)* • *A Spot of Tea (50)* • *Deals on meals (under $25) (51)* • *Steak your life on it (51)* • *Discovering What's New (52)* • *Decor to die for (52)* • *Ethnic eating (53)* • *If al fresco's your style (54)* • *We never close—well, almost never (54)* • *Pizza Classics (55)* • *Chicago's Pizza (55)* • *The Italian battalion (56)* • *French toast (56)* • *6 Days a Week (57)* • *Isn't it romantic? (57)* • *Eating solo (58)* • *Noshing between galleries (58)* • *Near Mag Mile shopping (58)* • *Hot Dogs (59)* • *Morning glories (59)* • *Absolutely fabulous (60)* • *Kitchens Up Close (61)* • *Neighborhood favorites (61)* • *Off the eaten track (61)* • *Chicago Treats (62)* • *The children's hour (62)* • *Healthful eating (63)* • *Near the theaters (63)*

Maps

Map 5 Chicago Dining 46
Map 6 Magnificent Mile & River North Dining 64
Map 7 The Loop Dining 65

The Index **66**
An A to Z list of places to dine, with vital statistics

3 DIVERSIONS **84**

Basic Stuff **88**
Getting your Bearings 88

The Lowdown **89**
Must-sees (89) • *Special moments (90)* • *Only in Chicago (90)* • *Get yer cheap art here! (91)* • *Prowling the Gold Coast (91)* • *Oprah in Person (92)* • *Museumscapes (92)* • *Museum Free Days (93)* • *Ethnic museums (94)* • *The City's Architecture (95)* • *The wonders of science (95)* • *Talk is cheap (97)* • *Kid-pleasers (97)* • *Art al fresco (98)* • *Cruising the zoos (98)* • *Strolling around Old Town (99)* • *Insider Tips for Touring the Art Institute (100)* • *Gallery hopping (100)* • *T.G.I.F. in River North (101)* • *Mayhem on the trading floors (102)* • *One good read deserves another (102)* • *Cool views (103)* • *Photo Op (104)* • *Tried-and-true views (104)* • *Architectural masterpieces (104)*

• *Master Builders: Sullivan, Wright & Mies (105)* • *Six buildings that scream "Chicago" (106)* • *Architecturally significant* and *they scream "Chicago" (106)* • *The Wright stuff (107)* • *Home sweet historic home (108)* • *Blasts from the past (109)* • *Lincoln Parking (109)* • *Sky Train: Chicago's El (110)* • *It's a small world (110)* • *Up-and-comers (111)* • *You bowl me over (112)* • *School daze (113)* • *The best views in Lake View (114)* • *Rock Around the World (115)* • *Overhyped experiences (115)* • *Tour time (116)* • *Off the beaten track (117)*

Maps

Map 8 Chicago Diversions 86
Map 9 Magnificent Mile Diversions 118
Map 10 The Loop Diversions 119
Map 11 Hyde Park Diversions 120

The Index **121**

An A to Z list of diversions, with vital statistics

4 GETTING OUTSIDE **130**

The Lowdown **132**

Parks (132) • *A Few Good Men in Lincoln Park (134)* • *Mittless softball (134)* • *Playing pick-up (134)* • *Hitting the beaches (135)* • *Ahoy there (136)* • *Can you canoe? (136)* • *Sightseeing afloat (136)* • *Pedal pushers (137)* • *Out on a swim (138)* • *Par for the course (138)* • *The tennis racket (139)* • *Rollerblade runner (139)* • *What's nice on ice (139)* • *Run for your life (140)* • *The wind's beneath my wings (140)* • *You sleigh me! (140)* • *Read all about it (141)*

5 SHOPPING **142**

Basic Stuff **146**

Target Zones 146
Vertical Malls 147
Money Matters 148
Lunch on the Mag Mile 149
Hours of Business 149
Sales Tax 149

The Lowdown **149**

Landmarks (149) • *For pampered service (150)* • *Accessorize (150)* • *Auction Action (151)* • *Shopping scenes (151)* • *For foot fetishists (151)* • *For men with Cary Grant complexes (152)* • *For men who would rather resemble Lou Reed (152)* • *Shopping bags to show off (152)* • *Fashion forward (153)* • *Key notes (153)* • *Kid stuff, part one (154)* • *Kid stuff, part two (154)* • *Book nooks (154)* • *Used but not abused books (154)* • *For decorating divas (155)* • *Furnishing touches (155)* • *The sporting life (155)* • *The vintage vantage point (156)* • *Damen Avenue—the other Michigan Avenue (156)* • *Why go to New York? (156)* • *Labels for less (157)* • *When you need a sugar fix (157)* • *Help for wanderlust (157)*

Maps
Map 12 Chicago Shopping 144
Map 13 Magnificent Mile Shopping 158
Map 14 The Loop Shopping 159
The Index **160**
An A to Z list of places to shop, with vital statistics

6 NIGHTLIFE **172**
Basic Stuff **176**
Sources 176
Liquor Laws and Drinking Hours 177
The Lowdown **177**
Where grown-ups can be grown-ups (177) • Calling all slackers (177) • Dance fever (178) • Where not to hear the blues (179) • Places to hear live rock (179) • Places to hear live blues (180) • Places to hear live jazz (180) • Sports and suds (181) • Where the boys (and girls) are (181) • Hotel hotspots in the Loop (182) • Neighborhood spots downtown and near North Side (182) • Neighborhood spots in Lincoln Park/Old Town (183) • Neighborhood spots in Lake View/Wrigleyville (183) • Neighborhood spots on the South Side (184) • For something a bit different (184) • For people who wouldn't be caught dead drinking a Bud (184)
Maps
Map 15 Chicago Nightlife 174
Map 16 Magnificent Mile & River North Nightlife 185
Map 17 The Loop Nightlife 186
The Index **187**
An A to Z list of nightspots, with vital statistics

7 ENTERTAINMENT **196**
Basic Stuff **200**
Sources 200
Getting Tickets 201
The Lowdown **202**
The theater establishment (202) • The new generation (203) • On the fringes (204) • Classical sounds (205) • Chicago in the movies, part 3—The Suburbs (206) • What's opera, doc? (206) • Men in tights (206) • In concert (207) • Comedy tonight (209) • The spoken word (209) • Da sports (210)
Maps
Map 18 Chicago Entertainment 198
Map 19 The Loop Entertainment 212
The Index **213**
An A to Z list of venues, with vital statistics

HOTLINES & OTHER BASICS **222**

Airports (223) • Airport transport to downtown (223) • Babysitters (224) • Buses (224) • Business Hours (225) • Car rental (225) • Chicago Office of Tourism (225) • The Best Chicago Websites (226) • Chicago Park District (226) • Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) (226) • Children's Emergency Services (226) • Convention centers (226) • Dentists (226) • Doctors (227) • El (227) • Emergencies (227) • Events hotlines (227) • Festivals and special events (227) • Finding an address (229) • Gay guys and lesbians (230) • Hearing-impaired services (231) • Hospitals (231) • Internet Access (231) • Laundry (231) • Liquor laws and drinking hours (231) • Newspapers and magazines (232) • Parking (232) • Museums for Less (233) • Pharmacies (233) • Post Office (233) • Pro sports (233) • Radio stations (234) • Restrooms (234) • Safety (234) • Subways (235) • Taxes (235) • Ticket to Ride (235) • Taxis (236) • Time Zone (236) • Trains (236) • Travelers with disabilities (236) • TV stations (236) • Visitor information (237) • Weather (237) • Chicago's Average Temperatures & Precipitation (237)

GENERAL INDEX **238**

Accommodations Index 243

Restaurant Index 243

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the perfect vacation spot.

Okay, I might be exaggerating just a bit. But Chicago—despite its reputation as the "Second City"—can compete with New York or Disney World any day when it comes to vacation planning. Chicago, you see, is actually many different cities rolled into one: a cultural center with a world-renowned symphony, opera house, and theater scene; a family destination chock full of museums with kid-oriented, interactive exhibits; a sports-crazy place with two baseball teams (in addition to football, basketball, and hockey), where there's always a game going on somewhere; an outdoor wonderland where miles of biking and jogging paths wind along the picturesque coast of Lake Michigan; and so much more.

No matter what kind of trip you want, Chicago's got it covered. And while you'll need a guidebook to help you sort through everything, half the fun of a visit here is the unscheduled wandering, checking out neighborhoods and only-in-Chicago views. To get to know the people, the architecture, and the parks, you have to be willing to explore (on foot if possible, though a ride on one of our elevated trains—known as the el—will give you a whole new perspective).

While wandering the city, you'll probably be struck by how much life here revolves around Lake Michigan, so immense you can't see across to Indiana or Michigan (much to the surprise of

many who've never been here). Chicagoans give directions using the lake as a reference point (just remember that it's always to the east); in the summer it seems like everyone is heading toward the water for picnics, biking, or simply lolling around in the sun (in the winter, we also blame the "lake effect" for the extra layer of snow that piles up along the coastline). Buildings may come and go, but Lake Michigan remains the city's unchanging focal point, as architect Louis Sullivan wrote in the early 1900s: "Chicago can pull itself down and rebuild itself in a generation, if it will...a dream born of the incomparable lake..." Now, as new towers cast shadows over his creations, his words are still true. The water—and the open sky above—give Chicagoans room to breathe, room to think, room to hope. Stand on Oak Street Beach, a backdrop of high-rises and hotels behind you, and stare out at the vastness. Sit on the rocks at Belmont Harbor and watch the sailboats gracefully lope across the horizon on an early summer morning. It will clear your head for sure, maybe even calm your soul.

Turn away from the vastness, and you'll learn that Chicago is a city of neighborhoods: The Loop, Lincoln Park, Hyde Park, Lake View, Andersonville, Wicker Park—the list could fill a page (now more than ever, as old-time neighborhoods get carved up and renamed to give developers and other real estate sharks a new sales handle). But just a list of names would be meaningless. Canaryville sounds quaint, doesn't it? Well, it's not; it's a tough Irish enclave. Streeterville is a lumpy moniker, right? Well, it's the ritzy neighborhood where Oprah Winfrey lives.

It was in these neighborhoods that the city's successive waves of immigrants hunkered down and tried to re-create their homeland in the face of the next influx. The neighborhood known as Pilsen, for instance, began as an immigrant Czech area, but starting in the 1950s, Mexicans moved in, and today its main drag, 18th Street, is lined with Mexican diners, taquerias, and music shops blaring salsa. Rogers Park still has kosher delis, bakeries, and butchers with window signs in Hebrew, but in the past decade it's been infiltrated by East Indian restaurants, sari shops (mysteriously, they also often sell small appliances), and video stores trafficking in Indian films. Wicker Park, touted by many as the successor to Seattle's grunge scene, was once a well-to-do German neighborhood.

The South and West Sides were prime destinations for the great black migration earlier in this century, explaining why Chicago has contributed so much to African-American culture.

This is the home of the Nation of Islam, Johnson Publications (*Ebony* and *Jet*), Oprah's Harpo Productions, the late Native Son novelist Richard Wright, and the blues of Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. This is also the home of grinding poverty and some of the most notoriously crime-ridden housing projects in the country, as anyone who's read Alex Kotlowitz's sobering bestseller *There Are No Children Here,* or who's seen the 1994 documentary *Hoop Dreams,* knows. Though long reputed to be America's most segregated big city, the races here seem to have reached a détente, as the popularity of Mayor Richard Daley the younger has, in Harold Washington's wake, spread across racial lines, and Michael Jordan and Oprah Winfrey serve as role models for kids of all colors. The increasing Hispanic population forms the other third of the racial balance here, its visibility and power growing accordingly.

Chicago has the variety you'd expect in America's third largest city—rich ditzy socialites, yuppie advertising copywriters, drug dealers, dowdy gay men and lipstick lesbians, jetsetters, Tibetan refugees, Pakistani taxi drivers, grocery store clerks, sports giants, and more. But though its people are diverse in race and interests, the city's ethos is remarkably unified. It is—and don't laugh—a reasonably happy place. Not a mindlessly smiley-face kind of place, but a place where people try to be pleasant and get on with it. Sure, it's had its serious, even tragic, moments—the Great Fire that destroyed most of the city in 1871; the riots during the '68 Democratic convention; the week in July 1995 when hundreds of people died because of a brutal heat wave—but overall, Chicago is a seat-of-the-pants kind of town. If you have troubles, they're your troubles, not Chicago's.

One of Chicago's many great literary offspring, Nelson Algren, wrote about his home, "Like loving a woman with a broken nose, you may well find lovelier lovelies. But never a lovely so real." The gritty Chicago that Algren knew has been spiffed up considerably (as you'll see when you check out the boutiques on Michigan Ave. or dodge designer strollers along Armitage Ave.). But it's still at heart a down-to-earth place: You'll find very little attitude, pretentiousness, or posing. To discover the real Chicago, don't limit yourself to the downtown museums and high-rise malls. Wander among the historic town homes of the Gold Coast; browse the funky shops of Wicker Park; grab a table at a Lincoln Park coffee shop. Chicago prides itself on being a city of neighborhoods, so go out and discover some of them.

Chicago's residents genuinely take advantage of their city, broken nose or not, from the Ferris wheel on Navy Pier to the sailboat harbors along the lake to the bleachers of Wrigley Field, cheering on the Cubbies. The art museums are jammed with locals; so is Orchestra Hall and the Lyric Opera. Everybody strolls along Michigan Avenue, not just the swells who can actually afford to buy things at Nieman Marcus. Civic festivals, from the over-hyped "Taste of Chicago" to the huge jazz, gospel, and blues fests, draw millions of Chicagoans from every possible race and status, all sitting affably together on their blankets, under the stars.

Still, residents don't often take lazy boat tours of the Chicago River, or gawk at the top of the Sears Tower, one of the world's tallest buildings. We tell ourselves that those obvious pleasures are just for tourists—that is, until Uncle Jerry and Aunt Elaine come in from out of town and we have to show them *American Gothic* at the Art Institute and stand in line forever at Christmastime for a table in the Walnut Room at Marshall Field's on State Street, just so we can sit under the huge tree. We grumble and groan about looking like tourists, and we love it. We love the excuse to explore our own city.

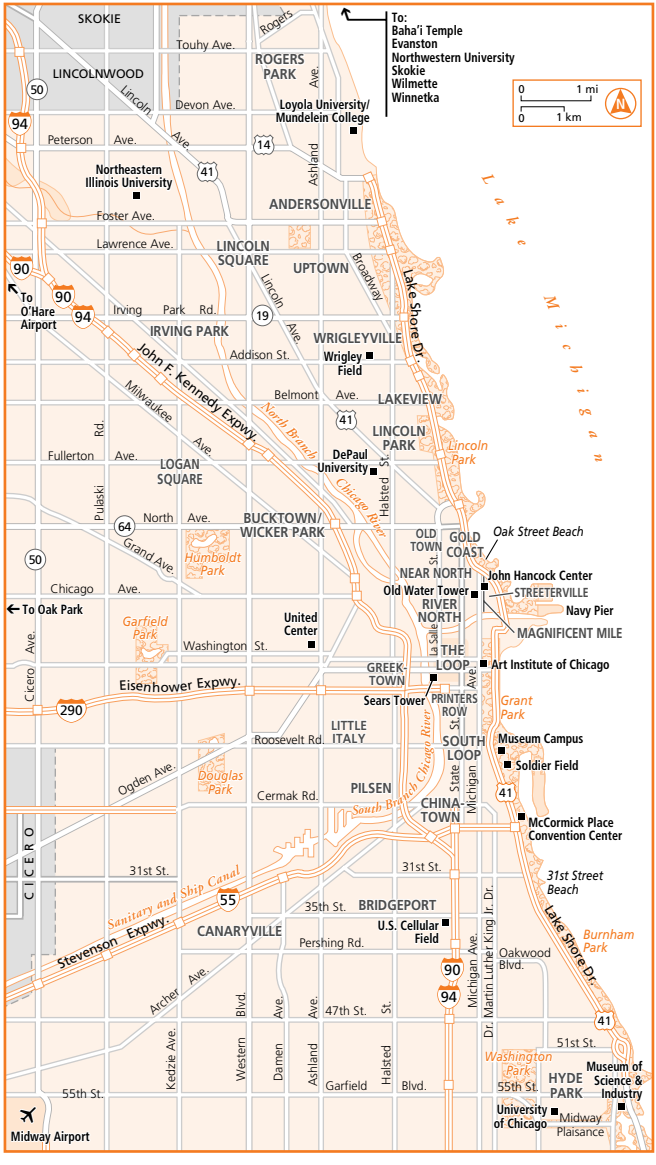
And we don't let the weather stop us. One of the great myths about Chicago is that the weather stinks. Yes, winter lasts a long time—it's freezing or below that about a third of the year—and the skies can be gray for weeks. But the annual low temperatures usually aren't as bad as those in Denver, Minneapolis, Spokane, and Omaha—they're more on the level of Kansas City and Albuquerque. (Chicago may have some colder individual days, but the overall average low temperature is about the same.) Don't get scared by the fact that it was 27 degrees below zero (–33°C)—without the wind chill factored in—on New Year's Day 1985, or that Chicagoans are 177% more likely to own a snowblower than the rest of the country. Be like a Chicagoan and dress for the season. It's winter—it's supposed to be cold. People here take a perverse pride in their ability to handle the elements (though they don't revel in the cold like Montrealers or Minnesotans, throwing carnivals amid heaps of snow). No, the pleasure here comes in facing down the annual invasion of ice and cold and slush and still doing business as usual. It takes a lot to shut this city down, so pile on the fur, goose down, wool, electric socks, and bun warmers, no matter how stupid you end up looking. Summers can be, and generally are, hot and humid—the average high in July is over 85°F

(29°C)—but those lucky enough to live near the lake (or play near it) don't suffer so much. The phrase "cooler by the lake" really means what it says—in fact, it can be up to 10 degrees cooler along the shore. (And the opposite is true as well—in winter it can be up to 10 degrees warmer.)

Summer allows you to go to Oak Street Beach, hanging out with tanned and toned natives who can look surprisingly like the real-life cast of *Baywatch.* In winter you can cross-country ski through Lincoln Park and then sip a hot chocolate overlooking a tranquil lagoon that looks like something right out of a postcard. In spring you can inhale the scent of the formal gardens in Grant Park beginning to bloom. And in autumn...well, September, October, and November all are consistently gorgeous. Acres of trees lining the shores of Lake Michigan become a living, breathing Impressionist painting, their muted colors blending in with one another in a way that would have awed Monet. The air is crisp as an apple and a cool, pristine breeze settles over the city. Every season here has its pluses—and a few minuses. Spring and early summer can be beautiful, but it's also prime convention season, when hotel prices skyrocket and getting prime restaurant reservations is a struggle.

But the beauty of Chicago is that you have options—lots of them. When the weather's great, you can wander outside; if it's pouring rain or blazing hot, you can spend days exploring museums and indulging in long lunches. In fact, I can pretty much guarantee you won't have time to see everything. In which case, you're welcome back anytime.

Map 1: Chicago & Neighborhoods



YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW

Why do they call Chicago the Second City?... If you're speaking in terms of population of the United States, these days Los Angeles beats Chicago. (New York still wins, however.) Legend has it, though, that the term "Second City" refers to more than just population: After the Great Fire in 1871, much of the city was rebuilt, and locals supposedly started referring to the new, glistening sections of town as the "second city." The phrase eventually caught on to describe Chicago as a whole. Some folks would have you accept that they call it the "Second City" because New York comes first. Don't believe them. Bostonians are obsessed with New York. Chicagoans just want the Cubs to win.

Why do they call it the Windy City?... No doubt, Chicago is windy—it sits on a big body of water, and winds whip across it throughout the year. But other cities are just as windy, if not windier (Oklahoma City and Atlanta, for

example, annually average faster winds than Chicago). Although a record 69-mph wind blew through the city on April 14, 1984, the average is a measly 10 mph. There are various legends as to why Chicago became known as the "Windy City," but the most popular blames it on the fact that over the decades it has hosted so many presidential nominating conventions, with all those "windy-mouthed" politicians generating so much hot air. That certainly hasn't changed.

What is "the Loop"?... Once upon a time, the el tracks made a loop around a compact and dense area of downtown. Well, they still do—the el tracks haven't been moved—but the encircled area long ago burst at its seams. Nowadays when Chicagoans speak of the Loop, they're referring to anywhere east and south of the Y-shaped Chicago River, north of Roosevelt Road, and west of Lake Michigan. The Loop means downtown, the financial heart of things, a cultural and commercial nerve center packed with landmarks and theaters and smart hotels (all of which exist in other parts of town as well, but not in such concentration). This is where Chicago's big-city pulse throbs most insistently.

So why does the Loop seem so empty in the winter?... Chicagoans may claim that they like the great outdoors, but when the temperatures dip below zero (with an icy wind whipping off Lake Michigan), thousands of Loop office workers and shoppers head for the Pedway, a subterranean maze of walkways. These underground paths connect numerous train stops, much of the Loop, and its environs, and are open on weekdays from 6am to 6:30pm. Since they attract lots of walkers, they're perfectly safe; you can pick up things like a newspaper or candy bar at the small shops scattered along the way. "You are Here" signs are marked throughout, though getting lost is half the fun, or at least half the adventure.

What's so magnificent about the Magnificent Mile?... The Magnificent Mile isn't, in fact, a mile at all—this stretch of Michigan Avenue, starting at Oak Street and running south to the Chicago River, measures slightly less than a mile in length. Magnificent it is, though, without a question. Once lined with some of the city's most renowned

architecture, the street has evolved over the years from a sleepy yet chic thoroughfare of five-story limestone buildings, to a bustling, traffic-choked canyon of cash-cow retailers and gleaming office buildings. Yet it still manages to be elegant, wide, and surprisingly light-filled, with water on both ends (the lake at the north end, the river at the south). The Mag Mile is the true retail center of the city, as well as a business center and an upscale residential neighborhood. And at Christmastime, when the trees are strung with tiny white lights that make the street glitter like a diamond necklace, it's an especially gorgeous sight.

Does size really matter?... To most of us, no, but that doesn't stop us from boasting about the John Hancock Center and Sears Tower, two of the world's tallest buildings (both of which were recently, and sorely, overtaken by twin towers in Kuala Lumpur). We've also got the biggest urban zoo (the Lincoln Park Zoo), the longest uninterrupted public coastline in any major U.S. metropolitan area, and the world's largest commercial office building (the Merchandise Mart).

Does Chicago really have more Polish people than anywhere save Warsaw?... Well, there are about two million people in Warsaw—presumably almost all Poles, right?—and, according to the Polish Museum of America (Tel 773/384-3352; 984 N. Milwaukee Ave.), about one million Poles and Polish-Americans are living in Chicago. Nowhere else comes close.

Chicago in the movies, part 1—downtown

For a pretty good re-creation of 19th-century Chicago, check out the 1938 period piece In Old Chicago, starring Tyrone Power and Don Ameche as two sons of Mrs. O'Leary, the lady who accidentally started the Chicago Fire (the lavish sets and special effects made it one of the most expensive movies of its time). Brian DePalma's mob pic The Untouchables *(1987), starring Kevin Costner, Sean Connery, and Robert De Niro, had one great shootout scene with a baby carriage bouncing down the steps at Union Station. Chicago almost saw its destruction during 1980's* The Blues Brothers, *when John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd drove their Bluesmobile through Daley Plaza. And who could forget* The Beginning of the End, *a horrible 1957 sci-fi flick with Peter Graves in which giant grasshoppers invade Chicago?*

How can I sound like a real Chicagoan?... Pronounce the city's name Chicawgo, not Chicahgo. For added authenticity, tack an extra preposition onto the end of sentences: "We're all going to the mall—are you coming with?" "Yeah, where's it at?" ***Note:*** Most residents do *not* talk about "da Bears" or rave about "Polish sah-sage." Doing so will only make you look like a wannabe—and trust me, it's not funny: We've heard it all a million times before.

Is Michael Jordan still a Chicago icon?... Yes. However, in the eyes and hearts of many, his approval ratings became as shaky as his knees when he put on that Washington Wizards jersey.

Well, I brought my car—now where am I going to park it?... Parking on the street in most neighborhoods is a huge pain in the keister—meters are enforced by an army of persnickety meter readers, and a parking space on side streets, where it's free, is a rare commodity. In addition, the city of Chicago loves, loves, loves to have cars towed, and the companies that do the actual towing are not known for service with a smile. (It'll cost you at least $100 to ransom your car.) Most decent restaurants have valet parking for $7 or $8, which is a good deal, considering the cost to your psyche of driving around the block for a half-hour looking for a space. There are privately owned parking garages all over the city, which are generally well-lit, safe, and convenient, if pricey. Municipal lots, where the prices are lower than the private garages' ($12 for 24 hours), are all downtown under Grant Park.

Where can I hear music for free?... The city itself sponsors some of the best sounds every summer—and you don't have to pay a dime. Chicago's lineup of three-day music festivals, which takes place at the **Petrillo Music Shell** in Grant Park, rivals the music you'll hear anywhere else in town. The best events are the **Chicago Blues Festival,** the **Chicago Gospel Festival,** and the **Chicago Country Music Festival,** all in June and the **Chicago Jazz Festival** and **Viva! Chicago,** the Latin music festival, in August. In addition, the **Grant Park Symphony and Chorus** presents nighttime outdoor concerts ranging from classical to show tunes at the Frank Gehry–designed

Pritzker Music Pavilion in Millennium Park; shows are scheduled on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings throughout the summer.

Can I go to the opera and the symphony when I'm in town?... It depends on when you come. Just like the weather, Chicago's cultural resources have seasons, too. The **Lyric Opera of Chicago** (Tel 312/332-2244), for instance, performs September through March, the **Chicago Opera Theater**'s (Tel 312/443-1130) season is June through July, so neither of them will be around if you're here in the spring. The **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** (Tel 312/294-3000 or 800/223-7114) plays September through June; in the summer they retire to **Ravinia,** an outdoor pavilion in suburban Highland Park, while downtown the **Grant Park Symphony and Chorus** (Tel 312/742-7638) concerts begin in June and run through August.

What if I gotta go?... Chicago's a pretty user-friendly place when it comes to finding decent, clean public bathrooms. Hotels, of course, are your best bets. **The Drake, The Ritz-Carlton,** and the **Four Seasons Hotel** are all reliable way stations. There are little-known and very private bathrooms at both **Crate & Barrel** and **Banana Republic** on Michigan Avenue. And, of course, there are bathrooms within all the department stores and high-rise downtown malls, such as **Water Tower Place** and **900 N. Michigan Ave.**

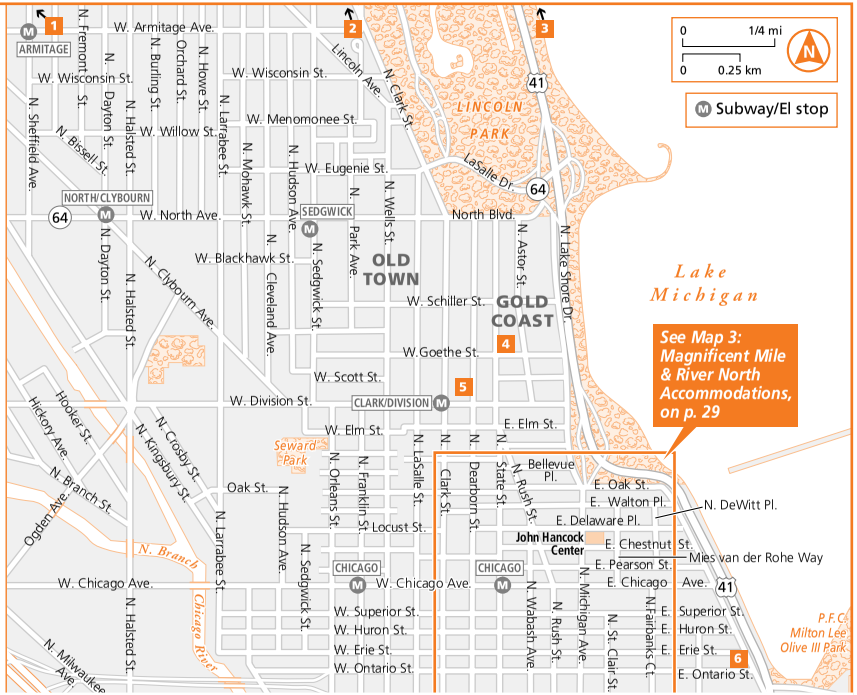
ACCOMM

ODATIONS

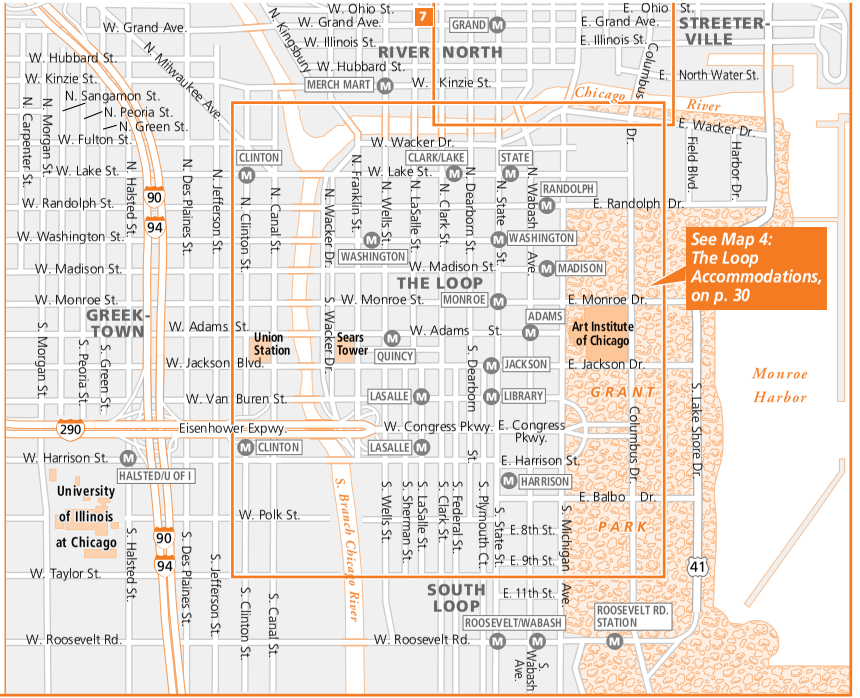
1

Map 2: Chicago Accommodations

- Arlington House **2**
- Best Western Hawthorne Terrace **2**
- Best Western River North Hotel **7**
- City Suites Hotel **2**
- The Claridge **5**
- DoubleTree Guest Suites **6**
- Embassy Suites Hotel O'Hare-Rosemont **1**
- Hyatt Regency O'Hare **1**
- The Majestic Hotel **3**
- Omni Ambassador East **4**
- Ramada Inn Lakeshore **3**
- Sheraton Gateway Suites **1**
- Sofitel Chicago O'Hare **1**
- W Chicago Lakeshore **6**
- The Willows **3**



0 3 mi
0 3 km
Lake Michigan
94
41
90
Wrigley Field
CHICAGO
Map area
THE LOOP
290
U.S. Cellular Field
55
90
41
Midway
94


W. Ohio St.
W. Grand Ave.
N. Kingsbury
W. Illinois St.
7
GRAND
E. Ohio St.
E. Grand Ave.
E. Illinois St.
STREETER-VILLE
RIVER NORTH
W. Hubbard St.
MERCH MART
W. Kinzie St.
Columbus Dr.
E. North Water St.
Chicago River
E. Wacker Dr.
Field Blvd
Harbor Dr
W. Wacker Dr.
CLINTON
CLARK/LAKE
STATE
W. Lake St.
RANDOLPH
E. Randolph Dr.
See Map 4: The Loop Accommodations, on p. 30
WASHINGTON
W. Madison St.
MADISON
THE LOOP
W. Monroe St.
MONROE
E. Monroe Dr.
ADAMS
Art Institute of Chicago
GREEK-TOWN
W. Adams St.
Union Station
Sears Tower
QUINCY
JACKSON
E. Jackson Dr.
Monroe Harbor
W. Jackson Blvd.
W. Van Buren St.
LASALLE
LIBRARY
GRANT PARK
S. Lake Shore Dr.
290
Eisenhower Expwy.
W. Congress Pkwy.
E. Congress Pkwy.
CLINTON
LASALLE
W. Harrison St.
HALSTED/U OF I
E. Harrison St.
HARRISON
E. Balbo Dr.
University of Illinois at Chicago
W. Polk St.
S. Branch Chicago River
E. 8th St.
E. 9th St.
W. Taylor St.
SOUTH LOOP
E. 11th St.
ROOSEVELT/WABASH
ROOSEVELT RD. STATION
W. Roosevelt Rd.
N. Milwaukee Ave.
N. Sangamon St.
N. Peoria St.
N. Green St.
W. Fulton St.
W. Lake St.
W. Randolph St.
W. Washington St.
W. Madison St.
W. Monroe St.
W. Adams St.
W. Jackson Blvd.
W. Van Buren St.
W. Harrison St.
W. Polk St.
W. Taylor St.
W. Roosevelt Rd.
N. Morgan St.
N. Carpenter St.
N. Halsted St.
N. Des Plaines St.
N. Jefferson St.
N. Clinton St.
N. Canal St.
N. Franklin St.
N. Wacker Dr.
N. Wells St.
N. LaSalle St.
N. Clark St.
N. Dearborn St.
N. State St.
N. Wabash Ave.
S. Morgan St.
S. Peoria St.
S. Green St.
S. Halsted St.
S. Des Plaines St.
S. Jefferson St.
S. Clinton St.
S. Canal St.
S. Wacker Dr.
S. Dearborn St.
S. Wells St.
S. Sherman St.
S. LaSalle St.
S. Clark St.
S. Federal St.
S. Plymouth Ct.
S. State St.
S. Michigan Ave.
S. Wabash Ave.
94
90
41

Basic Stuff

Chicago can claim some hip boutique hotels, but the truth is that this is a big convention town—a really big convention town, and even the trendiest lodgings tend to be filled with business travelers during the week. (Go to Miami if you want to stay with the beautiful people.) Happily, you'll find that the booming convention business has actually been a plus (with only a few drawbacks) when it comes to hotel choices within Chicago.

On the upside, there are many, many hotels catering to people and corporations with various budgets, from deluxe to demure to depressing (though none of the latter are listed here). The sheer number of hotels also has meant that there is a wide breadth of styles available, from small and intimate European-style inns to you-know-what-you're-gonna-get chain hotels to showy chintz-furnished palaces. The downside, of course, is that some hotels—especially the you-know-what-you're-gonna-get-niks—can be about as personal as a Wal-Mart. They're used to dealing in volume, so don't expect a French-accented concierge who'll remember your name, or rooms with much dash.

Because of the number of conventions the city hosts, there are certain times of the year when it is almost impossible to book a room if you haven't done so way in advance. Blocks of hundreds of rooms in many of the bigger hotels are reserved annually for conventioneers. If you visit the city when one of the big conventions is in town, you may be sharing your temporary home with hordes of midlevel vice-presidents traipsing the halls in starchy white shirts, dark suits, and plastic name tags.

Crowds notwithstanding, however, the overall selection of hotels in Chicago outshines that of most other cities. In the past decade or so, there has been a hotel building boom, and thousands of newly available (mostly upscale) rooms in such hotels as the **Peninsula Chicago,** the **Park Hyatt,** and **Sofitel Chicago Water Tower** have forced the old stalwarts—like **The Palmer House Hilton,** which had fallen on musty times—to invest millions of dollars in renovations just to remain viable. And, perhaps because of the competition, even in the biggest of the big convention sleep warehouses, service is more often with a smile than a sneer. After all, the city's hotel employees are aware that conventioneers return to Chicago year after year in part because the service is so consistently good.

Winning the Reservations Game

There's only one real rule when making a hotel reservation in Chicago: Don't be a chump. In other words, don't agree to pay what are referred to in the hotel business as "rack rates," meaning the highest nightly fee at which rooms are rented—which is the one you'll be quoted. It's not that you can exactly haggle with the reservations clerk—though you've got nothing to lose by trying—but there are many ways to get a better price. Most hotels have special corporate rates, which may be 10 percent lower than the rack rate. In most cases, you'll have to prove you're really there on business, but some hotels will simply take you at your word. Often there are also deals for frequent fliers, seniors, auto-club members, people in the military and others who work for the government, or teachers and others who work in education. It pays, literally, to ask about any of these.

Because most conventions occur during the week, Chicago hotels are relatively uninhabited on weekends, even during peak season. Most offer weekend hotel packages year-round, so if you're in town for an entire week, you could stay the weekdays at a bland-but-not-too-expensive chain hotel and then move to a fancier place for about the same price or less for the weekend. Some hotels in Chicago also offer special tie-ins with various events and exhibitions. A number of downtown hotels, for example, work with the Art Institute to create weekends geared toward art lovers who may be visiting Chicago just to see the museum's latest blockbuster show (check the "Visitor Information" section of the museum's website: www.artic.edu). Theater tie-ins are another popular way hotels lure guests.

Hotels well-known for the views offered from one side of their building may discount the rooms on the other side, so it's always smart to ask if you can get a cheaper room if you face the city instead of the lake. (After all, there are other ways to see the lake.) Making reservations early is imperative, as well, especially if you are traveling during peak season—April, May, and June, when the weather is the most pleasant and/or when the biggest conventions take over the town. During non-peak months, however, rooms may be discounted up to 50 percent off the rack price. You can also get a 50-percent-or-more discount if you go through **Hot Rooms** (Tel 800/468-3500; www.hotrooms.com), a Chicago-based service that works with about 30 downtown and Gold Coast hotels. You can call Hot Rooms 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and there's no fee (though if you make a confirmed reservation and then cancel there is a $25 fee). It's also

worth checking prices on some of the big travel websites, including Travelocity, Expedia, and Hotels.com.

Is There a Right Address?

Most of the city's best (and most expensive) hotels are along, or at least nearby, the **Magnificent Mile,** from **The Drake** at Michigan Avenue's northern tip to the **Hilton Chicago** farther south. Recent additions to the city's hotel scene, including the **Peninsula Chicago** and the **Hard Rock Hotel,** are in the North Michigan Avenue area, the retailing center of the city, which has many of the best restaurants within walking distance as well. If you want to be near the action, but not in the center of the storm, you might try staying in the **Gold Coast** neighborhood just north of Michigan Avenue. Its quiet, tree-lined streets are some of the city's poshest. It's peaceful and understated, yet near enough to the beach and shopping that you won't need a cab every time you walk out the door of your hotel. If you'd rather be in a residential neighborhood—or your plans include a three-day stint attending Cubs games—you're better off staying in **Lake View,** which has a few small, inexpensive places within walking distance of Wrigley Field. For business trips or museum-hopping, **the Loop** is a good bet, given its proximity to the financial district, convention center, and the Art Institute, et al., but keep in mind that there aren't too many restaurants in the area, and nightlife will most likely require a cab ride. Except for the blocks around a few downtown theaters, The Loop is so dead after-hours and on weekends, it can seem eerie. Some of the city's poshest high-rise hotels—including **The Fairmont Chicago** and **Swissôtel**—are stuck in a few isolated blocks of high-rises way east of Michigan Avenue. They have great views all around, but it's a trek (usually involving a cab) to get anywhere; there's nothing to do in the immediate area, so a visit can assume a surreal, where-is-everybody feel. The hotels near **O'Hare Airport** are, well, near the airport.

The Lowdown

Big bucks de luxe... Guests schlep Marshall Field's and Lord & Taylor bags right upstairs from Water Tower Place to the twelfth floor, where they enter the enormous greenhouse lobby of **The Ritz-Carlton.** The tone is set by plush furnishings, an oddly loud but fanciful fountain, English tea

carts piled high with pastries and dainty sandwiches, and other guests surrounded by mountains of Louis Vuitton luggage and hovering uniformed bellhops. The hotel spends more than a quarter-million dollars a year just on flowers, and it shows. The **Four Seasons Hotel,** which sits atop Bloomingdale's, seems like a huge English country manor in the sky in many ways. Its understated lobby, full of nooks and crannies, exudes understated elegance, making this a popular spot for publicity-shy celebrities. If you'd rather make a grand entrance, head for the **Peninsula Chicago,** where the swanky high-ceilinged lobby evokes images of 1930s Shanghai or Hong Kong. The guest rooms forgo fussiness in favor of clean lines and neutral tones, and include high-tech "command stations" that allow you to open the curtains or change the room temperature without getting out of bed. Whereas the Ritz-Carlton, Four Seasons, and Peninsula all ooze traditional elegance, the **Park Hyatt** on Michigan Avenue instead embraces a stern modernism, with hard surfaces, high ceilings, and contemporary furnishings. It's all very exacting, very beautiful, and a welcome relief from its competitors' chintz-and-high-tea atmospheres.

Chicago classics... The huge pink neon sign on the roof of **The Drake** has become as much a part of the city skyline as the nearby Hancock Center, which is about five times as tall. Built in 1920 by Ben Marshall, the famous architect to Chicago's rich and famous, and modeled after Renaissance palaces, the still-elegant Drake has an old-timey, aristocratic feel that some might find dowdy. But if you like the kind of environment where old ladies in white gloves and Republicans wearing wingtips feel at home, then this is the place for you. The barbershop, or as they call it, gentleman's grooming service, shouldn't be missed. Similarly, **The Palmer House Hilton,** the city's oldest hotel and the longest continually operated hotel on the continent, still offers a pretty fabulous welcome to the jillions of businesspeople passing through its portal, especially after a $120-million top-to-toe renovation in 2003. Located smack in the middle of the Loop, this Chicago institution has a spectacular gilded lobby with a soaring, mural-covered ceiling, sweeping staircases, and furniture covered in thick velvet brocades and moire taffetas. The sprawling **Hilton**

Chicago is the sort of place where waiters have been known to work for 50 years—one doorman started the day the hotel opened in 1927 and only retired decades later when he was 95 years old. This mini-city encompasses four restaurants and a steady stream of conventioneers—making it a good place for families, but not such a great choice for couples in search of romance. Unlike other Chicago classics, the quietly refined **Omni Ambassador East** is small enough that the concierge will probably remember your name. When you mention to locals that you're staying here, they nod a knowing nod and just say, "Ahhhh."

A home away from home... Looking for an escape from sprawling corporate hotels? The **Talbott Hotel**, with its pseudo-British, foxes-and-hounds decorating theme, has the casual comfort of a well-worn blazer and an unpretentiousness that is especially refreshing on the fringe of the Gold Coast. The **Whitehall Hotel,** a few blocks away, was a luxurious retreat for movie stars in the '40s and '50s and the Rolling Stones in the '60s; now it's a cozy boutique hotel with a clientele of regulars who prefer personal service to vast amenities (stop for a drink at the dark, clubby bar, which hasn't changed since the hotel opened in 1928, and the bartender might point out Katherine Hepburn's favorite table).

Best views... There are only three things you really want to see out your windows in Chicago: the lake, the skyline, or the Chicago River. At the **Renaissance Chicago Hotel** you can get all of the above, and sometimes from the same room (ask to face north), at least if you stay on one of the top floors. Across the river, **The Westin Chicago River North** has panoramic views of the Loop from all its south-facing rooms. At the modern but luxurious **Fairmont Hotel,** suites are lined up on the east side of the hotel to monopolize the best vistas of the lake and the city's downtown nine-hole golf course, Family Golf Center. There are unobstructed views from every angle of the triangularly shaped **Swissôtel,** even from the 42nd-floor health club and pool, though otherwise the place is bland as vanilla, and the Wacker Drive location feels isolated. There are great lake views from the **Hilton Chicago,** too, but its perspective of Grant Park and its gorgeous formal and wildflower gardens are the real knockouts. The **W Lakeshore Hotel** is the only hotel in the city with a

Lake Shore Drive address, which means fantastic panoramas of the city, lake, and Navy Pier. Though more expensive, the north-facing rooms at **The Drake** are the only ones in the city to overlook the lake, the Gold Coast, and Lincoln Park. At the post-modern **Sheraton Chicago,** the views are pretty terrific from both sides—it's how far up or down you are that makes all the difference. If you're facing north, try to get a room on a high floor for best views of North Michigan Avenue and the lake, but if you're on the south side, book a lower floor for spectacular views of the Chicago River.

Gold Coasters... Spiffy, uniformed doormen greet you beneath a dramatic, old-fashioned gold-and-creamy-white canopy at the Georgian-style **Omni Ambassador East,** located on a quiet residential street only a block from the lake in the affluent Gold Coast. The neighborhood location gives this Chicago classic an air of seclusion that once made it a celebrity favorite; you can even reserve the Frank Sinatra suite, where Ol' Blue Eyes himself used to stay when he was in town. Nearby, **The Claridge** offers the same neighborhood feel, convenience, and personal attention, all at lower prices, though its plainer furnishings, all in beiges and maroons, move it a couple of notches down on the glamour scale.

Chicago in the movies, part 2—the neighborhoods

About Last Night *(1986), one of the more stupid-but-famous movies made here, takes place in and around Lincoln Park, with brat packers Demi Moore, Rob Lowe, real Chicagoan James Belushi, and Elizabeth Perkins. The movie's set designer decorated an el stop—usually grungy and in need of paint—with Christmas lights and bunting during a holiday scene (a good use of our tax dollars, right?).* While You Were Sleeping *may have propelled Sandra Bullock to stardom, but the 1995 movie, filmed in Lake View, is totally implausible—believe me, real el token clerks are never as cute as the one she played. The first 10 minutes of 1989's* When Harry Met Sally *take place in Hyde Park at the University of Chicago (though Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan behave so stupidly, it's hard to believe they even got into the U of C to begin with). And for a taste of the South Side, try the 1975 comedy* Cooley High *(set in 1964), the riveting 1994 documentary* Hoop Dreams, *which chronicles the lives of two ghetto b-ball stars, and* Barbershop *(2002), which was filmed entirely in Chicago.*

New kids on the block... Forget charming, forget vintage. Sometimes you want to stay somewhere brand-spanking new. Newcomers to the Chicago hotel scene include the dramatic **Sofitel Chicago Water Tower,** which rises like a giant ship's prow into the sky; the inside is no less dramatic, with pulsing colored lights on the lobby floor and dramatic staircases rising above. Every room has a view of the surrounding cityscape (but you'll want to keep your shades closed come nighttime, unless you're the exhibitionist type). The big selling point for **Hotel 71** is its larger-than-average rooms—the building was originally designed to house small apartments, so if you're looking for space to spread out, you'll find it here. The **Hard Rock Hotel** has promised to bring some rock-'n'-roll attitude to Michigan Avenue, which so far means that the business travelers who stay here are younger and wear khakis rather than business suits. But the hotel is actively courting bands on tour, so you never know who you may spot in the lobby bar.

If everyone else stays on Michigan Avenue, I don't want to... Along the Chicago River on the edge of the Loop, the boxlike gray **Renaissance Chicago Hotel,** dripping with glitzy pretension, offers great city- and river-scapes. The sleek **The Westin Chicago River North** sits across the river, well inland from Michigan Avenue. Although it's in bustling River North, the riverside setting is tucked away from the traffic, and the interior feels blissfully tranquil. A few blocks away is the **Best Western River North Hotel**—good for those who'll spend most of their time out enjoying the neighborhood, rather than basking in the standard motel-issue rooms. A trio of quaint, quiet, quirky hotels run by the same management, **The Majestic Hotel, The Willows,** and the **City Suites Hotel** are smart choices for budget-minded travelers willing to stay far from the downtown crowd. Each is within walking distance of many of the city's gay bars and dance clubs, Wrigley Field, and the Lincoln Park Zoo, and only a few blocks from the lake, tennis courts, and the Waveland Golf Course (and only a 15-minute bus ride from the Mag Mile). In the Lake View neighborhood, what used to be a depressing blight of a building on Broadway, a main drag filled with coffee houses, bagel shops, clothing stores, and bars, is now the **Best Western Hawthorne Terrace,** a

delightful small hotel, perfect for those not wanting to stay downtown. Way off in Hyde Park, near the University of Chicago and the Museum of Science and Industry, there's not much lodging choice except for the **Ramada Inn Lakeshore.**

Style *and* substance... Chicago jumped aboard the booming "boutique hotel" trend in the 1990s, but simply looking stylish isn't enough in this town. The business travelers who flock here expect all kinds of amenities—and they want it all available *now.* So while the rooms (and staff members) at these places might look cool, their high ratings in customer service are what keep them in business. The **Hotel Allegro** and **Hotel Monaco** (owned by the same company) both go for a "fun" vibe with riotous colors and upbeat music—the Allegro attracts more of a family crowd, while the smaller Monaco aims for black-clad and trendy folks. Prepare for visual overload when you enter the **House of Blues Hotel,** with its eclectic mix of Asian, Moroccan, and New Orleans–inspired design. Also trying to lure in style-conscious guests are the **W City Center** and **W Lakeshore,** both of which feature self-consciously cool lobby bars, dim lighting, and rooms that you'll find either impressively nightclubby or depressingly dark. In the Loop, you'll find the **Hotel Burnham,** the owners of which deserve the prize for "best renovation," since it's housed in the architecturally significant Reliance Building, which they could have really messed up but instead preserved beautifully. A close runner-up in this category, however, goes to the **Crowne Plaza Chicago–The Silversmith,** originally built in 1897 by Peter J. Weber of the city's acclaimed architectural firm D. H. Burnham and Company. A complete renovation of the building in the late 1990s preserved the best of the building while allowing for 21st-century necessities, like in-room video checkout and dataports.

Lobbies to die for... You may feel breathless when you enter the gigantic lobby of the **Hilton Chicago,** all gilded and full of green and pink marble. The octagonal sunken lobby of **The Fairmont Chicago** is conspicuously filled with cushy velvet divans, glass-top tables, and flowers that fill the high-ceilinged space with a faintly sweet aroma.

Step off the seventh-floor elevator at the **Four Seasons Hotel,** and room after room, salon after salon, unfolds before you as if you're in some Merchant-Ivory film—tufted sofas and chairs, inlaid marble floors, highly polished English-y furniture, Chinese porcelain bowls, and a legion of uniformed men and women dashing about, presumably carrying out every whim of every guest. The lobby at the **Hampton Inn & Suites** has a collection of artifacts from Chicago buildings that have since gone bye-bye, including artifacts from Adler & Sullivan's Garrick Theater, the former Chicago Stock Exchange, and others.

Family values... Suite hotels are generally a great solution when you've got kids in tow, giving you what amounts to two rooms for the price of one, usually with cooking facilities to boot. The **DoubleTree Guest Suites, Embassy Suites,** and **Homewood Suites** all have indoor pools as a bonus. (The Embassy also has in-room Nintendo.) If cooking for yourself is about the furthest thing from your mind, and you've got the money, the family suite at the **Four Seasons Hotel** is definitely the way to go. There's a king-size bedroom for Mom and Dad and a smaller kids' bedroom with twin beds. Each suite has Nintendo, two bathrooms, kid-size bathrobes, and a minibar filled with jelly beans, chocolate chip cookies, and M&Ms. The **Holiday Inn Chicago City Centre**'s spacious and bright—if standard—rooms are kid-friendly (and children under 18 stay free with a parent), and the location near the beach will save you on transportation. Kids also stay free at the **Hampton Inn & Suites,** where the whole family can load up at the included breakfast buffet before heading out for the day.

For lovers and those who want to be... When you and your companion need to get away from it all (the office, the wife, the husband, the kids, the other lover), discretion is the key ingredient. **Le Méridien** is tucked away in a busy Michigan Avenue high-rise mall, but it's refreshingly quiet, the rooms are sparkling new, and the decor and room-service menu take inspiration from oh-so-romantic France. Just steps away from Michigan Avenue, it's surprisingly cozy and intimate at the **Whitehall Hotel,** a small boutique hotel with the feel of a bed-and-breakfast. If money is no object, splurge at the **Peninsula Chicago,**

where you can take advantage of an indulgent in-room couples massage, or the **Park Hyatt,** where some rooms have oversize bathtubs with a view, so you can lounge and bathe while enjoying a view of the city.

Suite deals... If you're traveling with the kids or insist on fixing your own eggs in the morning, try an all-suite hotel. Chicago has a number of them, where every guest room has at least a separate sitting area and some kind of kitchenette. Tops in this category are the sleek **Embassy Suites** with its echoing atrium, the crisply modern **Omni Chicago Hotel,** hovering above Michigan Avenue shops, and the traditionally furnished **DoubleTree Guest Suites** hotel, a high-rise right off Michigan Avenue that has some of the best views in town. All have pools and some kind of gym or health club, as does the somewhat smaller and more personal **Fitzpatrick Chicago Hotel,** where a book-lined lounge downstairs sets the homey tone. If you're talking suites—as in "I'm taking a suite of rooms for my entourage,"—that's a different and more luxurious story. The opulent Conrad Hilton Suite, named after the former owner of the **Hilton Chicago,** is a two-story mini-palace that sits on top of the hotel. The crash pad of choice for visiting presidents, it comes with its own butler (naturally) and a helicopter landing pad.

Mega-hotels for conventioneers... If you're here at a convention, you're probably staying at whatever place your company put you. At least you've been saved from having to decide among the massive, charm-free convention hotels. If you've been given that unfortunate duty, though, here are the ones to keep in mind. For sheer size, the standouts are the **Chicago Marriott,** a bland marble box on Michigan Avenue with more than 1,000 rooms and 55,500 square feet of exhibition space, and the **Hyatt Regency Chicago,** a mega-hotel with more than 2,000 cookie-cutter guest rooms and 188,000 square feet of meeting space. Both have about as much charm as a freeway, and you may feel stupid if you aren't wearing a "Hello, my name is..." tag pinned to your gray pinstripe, but they serve their purposes. The Hyatt's attached to the Illinois Center business complex by an underground maze of hallways, which also links it to the **Swissôtel,** with more than 600 rooms,

creating one big convention megalopolis. An enormous line of yellow cabs snaking around the **Hilton Chicago** is a sure sign a convention has just hit town. Ditto **The Palmer House Hilton,** well located in the Loop, whose more than 1,500 guest rooms fill up during peak convention season. Rooms at the **Sheraton Chicago** are more comfortable than you'd expect from this 1,200-room riverside hulk, and separate check-in areas help to keep conventioneers and other guests out of each other's way. The shiny gold **Hyatt Regency O'Hare** has only two things going for it: size (1,099 rooms and 60,000 square feet of exhibition space) and direct access to the O'Hare Expocenter.

Taking care of business... It seems as though every Chicago hotel is trying to be a "business hotel." Whereas the convention hotels succeed by having hangarlike amounts of space to handle the crowds, business hotels make an effort to see business travelers as individuals. The O'Hare-area **Embassy Suites Hotel O'Hare–Rosemont,** for example, gives you plenty of room to spread out, with separate living rooms, large desks, and halogen lamps so you can actually see your work. All the suites in the **Omni Chicago Hotel** have fax machines and voice mail, and you'll find in-room fax machines/copiers, modem hookups, and shoe buffers at **The Fairmont Hotel,** as well. As tony and almost as well-equipped is the **Renaissance Chicago Hotel,** where about a fifth of the rooms have multiple phone lines, dataports for modems, and fax machines; to help harried business travelers stay on schedule, they guarantee room-service delivery within 25 minutes or it's on the house (now if they could get that down to 10 minutes...). Business travelers at the **Westin River North** will appreciate the in-room printer/fax/copier, free local calls and long distance access, speakerphone, and no in-room fax surcharges, but no doubt the two best business features are the ergonomic desk chair and the stack of Post-it notes in the desk drawer. The dining table in the two-room suites at the **DoubleTree Guest Suites** easily doubles as a large work space, and the second phone line in every suite is a nice touch. The **Swissôtel,** housed in a modern glass tower, doesn't scream "family friendly," which is a plus for anyone who wants to concentrate on work without being distracted by shrieks from the kids staying next door.

Gym dandies... Well-equipped gym facilities (with Lifecycles, rowers, a Gravitron, treadmills, Nautilus weight stations, Stairmasters, and free weights) and swimming pools—or at least lap pools—are almost *de rigueur* nowadays, so it's no surprise that many of the city's most popular hotels, including the **Westin River North, Renaissance Chicago Hotel, Hilton Chicago, Embassy Suites,** and **Omni Chicago Hotel** have such high-end perks. Most will even lend you workout clothes. A few other hotels, though, have even more going for them. The **Swissôtel**'s 42nd-floor health club has dynamite views, and the **DoubleTree Guest Suites** has a great rooftop gym and pool. The **Four Seasons Hotel** has a ¼-mile outdoor running track and sundeck, as well as a glass-domed, eighth-floor 50-foot swimming pool, surrounded by columns and windows overlooking the city. The **Peninsula Chicago** pool is surrounded by floor-to-ceiling windows (with Michigan Ave. views). But even those can't compete with the utter fabulousness of the 13th-floor swimming pool at the **Hotel Inter-Continental Chicago.** Surrounded by stained-glass windows, mosaics, wicker chaise longues, huge potted palms, and wrought-metal sconces, the Italianate junior Olympic–size pool (75 ft.) was the training ground for the original Tarzan, Johnny Weissmuller. It's that cool.

Cheap sleeps... You don't get much in the way of luxurious perks by staying at **The Majestic Hotel, The Willows,** or the **City Suites Hotel,** three small, eccentric Lake View hotels, but you do get to lay your head on your pillow each evening knowing that you're not spending much. Conveniently located near the galleries and eateries of River North, The **Best Western River North Hotel** is a decent bargain: It's your standard chain hotel, but it does have a rooftop pool. If a central location is important to you, by far the cheapest place to stay near Michigan Avenue is the **Red Roof Inn,** just a block away from all the shopping. If you're willing to go for generic furnishings and minimal service, it's a perfectly fine cheap choice. Not quite as cheap but still a relative bargain is the **Allerton Crowne Plaza**—what the hotel obviously saves in decorating costs it apparently passes on to guests. But the hands-down cheapest

places to stay are two local hostels: **Arlington House** (in residential Lincoln Park) and the **Harris Family Hostel** (on South Michigan Avenue), where the clientele is mainly backpacking students and foreigners. The Harris Hostel is newer and offers more extras (museum discounts, an on-site restaurant, etc.); at Arlington House you'll have to bring your own linens, or rent theirs—it's that kind of place (though the coffee is free).

Oh so near O'Hare... A courtesy van shuttles people and luggage between the airport and the nearby hotels, which are many but undistinguished. You can while away the hours in your room at the **Sheraton Gateway Suites** by playing Nintendo, which is included in each room. The folks at the **Embassy Suites Hotel O'Hare–Rosemont** are nice enough to include a microwave in every two-room suite, for those too travel-weary to face another restaurant. The Rosemont also scores points for its Frank Lloyd Wright–inspired decor, using mahogany trim, barrel chairs, and stained-glass windows. The **Hyatt Regency O'Hare** offers an automated check-in and check-out machine (like an ATM) that takes about 90 seconds; you just stick in your credit card, punch a few buttons, and you're on your way. Give the relatively small and civilized (for an airport hotel, anyhow) **Sofitel Chicago O'Hare** a round of applause for trying to create a little excitement for its guests: You get a rose on your bed each night at turndown, and a loaf of French bread when you check out.

Map 3: Magnificent Mile & River North Accommodations

Allerton Crowne Plaza **11**
Chicago Marriott **17**
The Drake **5**
Embassy Suites **13**
Fitzpatrick Chicago Hotel **10**
Four Seasons Hotel **4**
Hampton Inn & Suites **18**
Holiday Inn Chicago City Centre **16**
Hotel Inter-Continental Chicago **20**
House of Blues Hotel, a Loews Hotel **22**
Le Méridien **19**
Omni Chicago Hotel **12**
Park Hyatt **8**
Peninsula Chicago **9**
Red Roof Inn **14**
The Ritz-Carlton **7**
Sheraton Chicago **21**
Sofitel Chicago Water Tower **2**
The Talbott Hotel **1**
W Chicago City Center **15**
The Westin Chicago River North **23**
The Whitehall Hotel **3**

Map 4: The Loop Accommodations

Crowne Plaza Chicago–
The Silversmith **10**
The Fairmont Chicago **7**
Hard Rock Hotel **4**
Harris Family Hostel **13**
Hilton Chicago **14**
Hotel Allegro **8**
Hotel Burnham **9**
Hotel Monaco **3**
Hotel 71 **2**
Hyatt Regency Chicago **5**
The Palmer House Hilton **11**
Renaissance Chicago Hotel **1**
Swissôtel **6**
W Chicago City Center **12**

The Index

$$$$$	over $300
$$$$	$200–$300
$$$	$150–$200
$$	$100–$150
$	under $100

Price ratings are based on the lowest price quoted for a standard double room in high season, including taxes and charges. Unless otherwise noted, rooms have air-conditioning, phones, private baths, and TVs.

The following abbreviations are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express
DC	Diners Club
DISC	Discover
MC	MasterCard
V	Visa

Allerton Crowne Plaza **(p. 27)** MAGNIFICENT MILE The generic-hotel decor inside can't compare to the carved stone 1920s exterior, but this place does have a spectacular location right on Michigan Avenue and you can often snag a decent room rate (as long as there's no big convention in town).... *Tel 312/440-1500 (800/621-8311). Fax 312/440-1819. www.allertonchi.crowneplaza.com. 701 N. Michigan Ave., at Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 443 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Arlington House **(p. 28)** LINCOLN PARK This friendly and cheap little hostel is on a leafy Lincoln Park street, about a 15-minute bus ride from downtown and within walking distance of many of the city's best blues, jazz, and dance clubs. There are both private rooms and dormitory sleeping arrangements.... *Tel 773/929-5380 (800/HOSTEL-5). Fax 773/665-5485. www.arlingtonhouse.com. 616 W. Arlington Place, at Clark St., Chicago, IL 60614. Fullerton el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). 200 beds, 40 private rooms. MC, V. $*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

Best Western Hawthorne Terrace (p. 22) LINCOLN PARK A former flophouse made adorable with a couple of bolts of cheery chintz, a renovation of its exterior, and a pleasant staff, this inexpensive neighborhood hotel has it all: walking distance to Wrigley Field and your pick of either sports bars or gay bars.... *Tel 773/244-3434 (888/860-3400). Fax 773/244-3435. www.hawthorneterrace.com. 3434 N. Broadway, at Hawthorne Place, Chicago, IL 60657. Addison el stop (Red Line). 59 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

Best Western River North Hotel (p. 22) RIVER NORTH The two main things the Best Western has going for it are its location amid trendy galleries and restaurants and its price (which includes free parking—a huge savings if you bring your car). There's also an indoor rooftop pool.... *Tel 312/467-0800 (800/528-1234). Fax 312/467-1665. www.rivernorthhotel.com. 125 W. Ohio St., at the corner of LaSalle, Chicago, IL 60610. Grand el stop (Red Line). 150 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

Chicago Marriott (p. 25) MAGNIFICENT MILE Despite its recent, well-intentioned exterior renovation, this is still quite possibly the ugliest hotel in the city. This mega-sleepery has three things going for it, though: location, location, and location. It's also one of the more reasonably priced hotels on the Magnificent Mile.... *Tel 312/836-0100 (800/228-0265). Fax 312/836-6139. www.marriott.com. 540 N. Michigan Ave., at Grand Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Grand el stop (Red Line). 1,192 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

City Suites Hotel (p. 22) LINCOLN PARK There aren't too many hotels that would boast about their former incarnation as the home to gangsters and their molls, but this small, funky place does. And why not, considering its location right on busy Belmont Avenue amidst restaurants, coffeehouses, nightclubs, and stores selling everything from Doc Martens to sun-dried tomato bagels. With the floors heavily carpeted and the windows equally draped (rooms are simply decorated with suave black-and-white tile bathrooms), the fact that the el rumbles by 24 hours a day only a few hundred yards away doesn't seem to bug anyone.... *Tel 773/404-3400 (800/248-9108). Fax 773/404-3405. www.cityinns.com. 933 W. Belmont Ave., between Halsted and Clark sts., Chicago, IL 60657. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). 45 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

The Claridge (p. 21) GOLD COAST This small Gold Coast hotel is a pleasant hideaway if you're looking for a neighborhood feel (and not a lot of frills). Continental breakfast in lobby and newspaper

delivered to your room daily.... *Tel 312/787-4980 (800/245-1258). Fax 312/266-0978. www.claridgehotel.com. 1244 N. Dearborn Pkwy., one block north of Division St., Chicago, IL 60610. Clark/Division el stop (Red Line). 161 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

Crowne Plaza Chicago–The Silversmith **(p. 23)** THE LOOP Located in a renovated and revitalized National Historic Landmark, this Loop hotel is an interesting alternative to the Marriotts and Sheratons of the world: Its Mission-style furniture harks back to the city's early days, which will at least identify your stay as being in Chicago as opposed to Anywhere, U.S.A.... *Tel 312/372-7696 (800/2-CROWNE). Fax 312/372-7320. www.silversmith.crowneplaza.com. 10 S. Wabash Ave., at Madison St., Chicago, IL 60603. Washington el stop (Red Line or Madison el stop (Brown Line). 143 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

DoubleTree Guest Suites **(p. 24)** MAGNIFICENT MILE What this all-suite hotel lacks in drama, it makes up for with two-room suites, lots of service, panoramic views, and an excellent rooftop gym facility and pool. White-gloved bellhops hanging around the lobby are a nice touch, though the Muzak ruins the effect.... *Tel 312/664-1100 (800/222-TREE). Fax 312/664-8627. www.doubletree.com. 198 E. Delaware Place, at Mies van der Rohe Way, Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 345 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

The Drake **(p. 18)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Quite possibly the city's most famous hotel, this limestone edifice is so gracious you feel like you have to whisper. The rooms, none of which are decorated exactly the same, are quietly elegant, with fancy draperies and furniture that's expensive but not showy. The hotel's bar, Le Coq D'Or, is one of the best—if not *the* best—hotel bars in the city. Dig those martinis.... *Tel 312/787-2200 (800/55-DRAKE). Fax 312/787-1431. www.thedrakehotel.com. 140 E. Walton Place, at Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 537 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Embassy Suites **(p. 24)** RIVER NORTH Rimming the huge central atrium, all suites have a living room with a sleeper sofa and a bedroom with either a king-size or two double beds, as well as mini-kitchens. A complimentary breakfast buffet, indoor pool, workout room, and a very good restaurant, Papagus Greek Taverna are all also on premises.... *Tel 312/943-3800 (800/EMBASSY). Fax 312/943-7629. www.embassysuites.com. 600 N. State St., between Erie and Ontario sts., Chicago, IL 60610. Grand el stop (Red Line). 358 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Embassy Suites Hotel O'Hare–Rosemont (p. 24) O'HARE AIRPORT Spiffy forest-green, beige, and burgundy two-room suites are clean-lined and bright, and have sofa beds, a microwave, refrigerator, and two TVs. You get a free full breakfast every morning delivered to your suite.... *Tel 847/678-4000 (800/EMBASSY). Fax 847/928-7659. www.embassysuites.com. 5500 N. River Rd., Rosemont, IL 60018. 293 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

The Fairmont Chicago (p. 18) THE LOOP Overlooking Grant Park, this pink granite high-rise hotel has bigger-than-usual rooms flooded with sunlight. You'll love the details here—feather and foam pillows, bedsheets of premium cotton, standing butlers, tie racks, and the best thick terry robes in town. Superbly outfitted bathrooms come complete with Neutrogena beauty products, a heat lamp, and (rare for Chicago hotels) a television. The only problem? The sense of isolation you'll feel once you walk out the front door.... *Tel 312/565-8000 (800/526-2008). Fax 312/856-1032. www.fairmont.com. 200 N. Columbus Dr., at Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60601. State/Lake el stop (Red Line). 692 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

Fitzpatrick Chicago Hotel (p. 25) MAGNIFICENT MILE A nice combination of a small, European-style hotel with room-to-stretch-out suites, the Fitzpatrick is cozy and charming. Perks include VCRs in every room, kitchens in most, and a health club and rooftop pool plus complimentary continental breakfasts and hors d'oeuvres.... *Tel 312/787-6000 (800/621-8004). Fax 312/787-6133. www.fitzpatrickhotels.com. 166 E. Superior St., at Fairbanks Court, Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 140 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Four Seasons Hotel (p. 19) MAGNIFICENT MILE Located in the same postmodern go-go eighties building that houses Bloomingdale's and Gucci, this hotel is one of the few that Chicagoans themselves frequent—the restaurants are top-notch and the bar and lounge are nightlife destinations for folks dressed in anything from jeans to tuxes. Guest rooms are done up in muted peaches, foam greens, and pinks, with shiny English furniture, heavily draped windows, and botanical prints; the minibar supplies not only the requisite booze and nuts but a disposable camera.... *Tel 312/280-8800 (800/332-3442). Fax 312/280-1748. www.fourseasons.com. 120 E. Delaware Place, at Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611–0142. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 343 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Hampton Inn & Suites (p. 24) RIVER NORTH This family-friendly hotel features one- and two-room suites, some with full kitchens, and on-site laundry facilities. There's a small workout area and

an indoor pool, but otherwise it's all pretty standard stuff. Pluses: walk-to-everything location, free breakfast buffet, free local calls and no charge for long-distance access (both a rarity nowadays), and kids under 18 stay free with a parent.... *Tel 312/832-0330 (800/HAMPTON). Fax 312/832-0333. www.hamptoninn.com. 33 W. Illinois St., between State St. and Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60610. Grand el stop (Red Line). 230 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Hard Rock Hotel **(p. 18)** THE LOOP The newest hotel in town promised to shake up the competition with some rock-star attitude. But the overall vibe at this rehab of a former 1920s office building is contemporary cool rather than party-hearty decadence. The lobby bar rocks on into the late-night hours, a rarity in the Loop.... *Tel 312/345-1000 (877/ROCK-HOTEL). Fax 312/345-1012. www.hardrockhotelchicago.com. 230 N. Michigan Ave., at Lake St., Chicago, IL 60601. State/Lake el stop (Red Line). 381 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

Harris Family Hostel **(p. 28)** THE LOOP A modern rehab of a downtown office building, this is far from your stereotypical shabby backpacking stop. The place is spotless and well-run, and it offers lots of activities for visitors (tours, museum discounts, etc.). Plan on sleeping dormitory-style (although a few "family rooms" are available), but the central location and helpful staff make this an impressive bargain.... *Tel 312/360-0300. Fax 312/360-0313. www.hichicago.org. 25 E. Congress Pkwy., between State St. and Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60605. Jackson el stop (Red Line). 500 beds. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

Hilton Chicago **(p. 18)** THE LOOP Grand in every way, from the ornate lobby with its 60-foot ceiling to the gilded ballrooms, this place has very well-appointed rooms—cherrywood cabinets and quilted bedspreads—and a terrific health club. This sprawling mini-city is great for families but is bad for couples looking for quiet romance.... *Tel 312/922-4400 (800-HILTONS). Fax 312/922-5240. www.chicagohilton.com. 720 S. Michigan Ave., at Balbo Dr., Chicago, IL 60605. Harrison el stop (Red Line). 1,544 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

Holiday Inn Chicago City Centre **(p. 24)** MAGNIFICENT MILE A huge high-rise a few blocks from Michigan Avenue, this glass-clad, 26-story monolith hosts lots of tour groups and business travelers. If you're looking for a kid-friendly place with a pool, you can't go wrong here: There's an outdoor pool and sundeck, and guests also get free access to the Lake Shore Athletic Club next door, which has a large indoor pool. Room decor is nicer than your

average Holiday Inn, but still innocuous.... *Tel 312/787-6100 (800/HOLIDAY). Fax 312/787-6259. www.chicc.com. 300 E. Ohio St., at Fairbanks Court, Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 500 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Hotel Allegro **(p. 23)** THE LOOP An old hotel gone hip—or, should we say, a corporation's idea of hip. The rooms are painted in bright "modern" colors, and are filled with kind-of ugly contemporary furniture (think IKEA). Still, it's got a great Loop location, good service, and wine in the evenings for guests.... *Tel 312/236-0123 (800/643-1500). Fax 312/236-0917. www.allegrochicago.com. 171 W. Randolph St., between LaSalle and Wells sts., Chicago, IL 60601. Washington el stop (Red Line). 483 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

Hotel Burnham **(p. 23)** THE LOOP For years the world-famous, architecturally significant Reliance Building was an urban disgrace, but now after a wonderful renovation, it's back to its glamorous self. There are great urban vistas from the huge windows, and an excellent restaurant with a vintage feel (Atwood Café; see p. 67).... *Tel 312/782-1111 (866/690-1986). Fax 312/782-0899. www.burnhamhotel.com. 1 W. Washington St., at State St., Chicago, IL 60602. Washington el stop (Red Line). 122 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

Hotel Inter-Continental Chicago **(p. 27)** MAGNIFICENT MILE This dual personality palace is actually two side-by-side hotels—one modern, one originally built in 1929 as an athletic club—joined together in 1994. Though the lobby is blandly contemporary, rooms in the older section have a lovely vintage feel, with Biedermeier furniture, heavy draperies, and brass lamps. The Art Deco indoor pool is considered one of the best in the city.... *Tel 312/944-4100 (800/327-0200). Fax 312/944-1320. http://chicago.intercontinental.com. 505 N. Michigan Ave., between Grand Ave. and Illinois St., Chicago, IL 60611. 807 rooms. Grand el stop (Red Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Hotel Monaco **(p. 23)** THE LOOP Kind of urban hip with a French twist, this place has great views and a pretty good American restaurant, South Water Kitchen, on its ground floor, as well as a goldfish in each room. The lobby can be a real scene, which can be good or bad, depending on your mindset.... *Tel 312/960-8500 (800/397-7661). Fax 312/960-1883. www.monaco-chicago.com. 225 N. Wabash Ave., between Lake St. and Wacker Dr., Chicago, IL 60601. State/Lake el stop (Red Line). 192 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

Hotel 71 (p. 22) THE LOOP Though it calls itself a boutique hotel, this hulking modern tower feels too big to fit the bill. Sure, the lobby has a nightclub vibe (complete with trance music and flat-screen monitors), but otherwise the place feels about the same as it used to when it was an apartment building. The biggest plus: rooms that are far larger than most of the competition. Nice city and river views, too.... *Tel 312/346-7100 (800/621-4005). Fax 312/346-1721. www.hotel71.com. 71 E. Wacker Dr., at Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60601. State/Lake el stop (Red Line). 454 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

House of Blues Hotel, a Loews Hotel (p. 23) RIVER NORTH A rock 'n' roll–themed hotel sounds tacky, but it's actually a lot of fun, located right next to one of the city's modern landmarks: the 1960s-era corncob-shaped Marina Towers apartment buildings. Upon check-in you're given a free "CD packet," with key cards and a complimentary compact disc. There's a cool bowling alley (yes, bowling alleys can be cool), and you can even rent a boat and cruise the Chicago River. Now *that's* nifty.... *Tel 312/245-0333 (800/235-6397). Fax 312/923-2444. www.loewshotels.com. 333 N. Dearborn St., at Kinzie St., Chicago, IL 60610. Grand el stop (Red Line). 365 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Hyatt Regency Chicago (p. 25) THE LOOP The lobby lounge covers half an acre; its greenhouse look, fountains, pools, and restaurants seem cool at first, but this entire hotel complex is so big, and signage is so bad, that you can't help but get lost at least once during your stay.... *Tel 312/565-1234 (800/233-1234). Fax 312/565-2966. www.chicagoregency.hyatt.com. 151 E. Wacker Dr., at Columbus Dr., Chicago, IL 60601. State/Lake el stop (Red Line). 2,019 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

Hyatt Regency O'Hare (p. 26) O'HARE AIRPORT Except for its huge, 11-story skylit atrium lobby with four glass elevators, this gargantuan convention hotel (there are 60 meeting rooms) is pretty standard stuff. A recent renovation has helped update the guest rooms, but this is still mainly convention country, with sprawling restaurants serving adequate food, and lots of people wearing name tags.... *Tel 847/696-1234 (800/233-1234). Fax 847/698-0139. www.ohare.hyatt.com. 9300 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Rosemont, IL 60018. 1,100 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

Le Méridien (p. 24) MAGNIFICENT MILE The local outpost of a French hotel chain, this is a retreat from the city's other mega-hotels, tucked away inside the Westfield North Bridge high-rise mall. Rooms are modern and bright, and the location is a big plus for winter visitors (you can shop at Nordstrom without going

outside). For high rollers, this is the only place in town where you can book a suite with a balcony overlooking Michigan Avenue.... *Tel 312/645-1500 (800/543-4300). Fax 312/645-1550. www.chicago.lemeridien.com. 521 N. Rush St., at Hubbard St., Chicago, IL 60611. Grand el stop (Red Line). 311 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

The Majestic Hotel **(p. 22)** LAKE VIEW This small out-of-the-way hotel is more inspiring for its low prices than its faux-English manor decor. No restaurant or room service here, but there is a complimentary continental breakfast and afternoon tea.... *Tel 773/404-3499 (800/727-5108). Fax 773/404-3495. www.cityinns.com. 528 W. Brompton St., between Lake Shore Dr. and Pine Grove Ave., Chicago, IL 60657. Addison el stop (Red Line). 52 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

Omni Ambassador East **(p. 20)** GOLD COAST Home to the world-famous The Pump Room, a restaurant living on nostalgia from the days when Judy Garland and Frank Sinatra used to eat here, this quiet hotel ranks high on glitz as well as refinement. Guest rooms, though all outfitted with classic furnishings, are not cookie-cutter similar. And, it's nice that the hotel doesn't take itself too seriously: The minibars are stocked with frozen Snickers bars, and a kids' program (also available at the Onmi Chicago, below) makes the hotel surprisingly family-friendly.... *Tel 312/787-7200 (800/THE-OMNI). Fax 312/787-4760. www.omnihotels.com. 1301 N. State Pkwy., at Goethe St., Chicago, IL 60610. Clark/Division el stop (Red Line). 285 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

Omni Chicago Hotel **(p. 27)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Considering the location and the fact that every room is a suite complete with fax and voice mail, this sleekly modern business favorite is something of a bargain (it's also the place where Oprah books rooms for her guests). The Italian restaurant, Cielo, has superb Mag Mile views. Full health club (including lap pool).... *Tel 312/944-6664 (800/THE-OMN). Fax 312/266-3015. www.omnihotels.com. 676 N. Michigan Ave., between Erie and Huron sts., Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 347 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

The Palmer House Hilton **(p. 16)** THE LOOP Once one of the city's grandest hotels, the huge Palmer House has a fabulous lobby and not-so-fabulous, standard-issue guest rooms. A huge renovation brought everything up-to-date but erased any historic charm along the way. A convention favorite, it's got several good-looking but so-so restaurants that help feed the hordes.... *Tel 312/726-7500 (800/HILTONS). Fax 312/917-1707. www.hilton.com. 17 E. Monroe*

St., between State St. and Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60603. Monroe el stop (Red Line). 1,640 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$

See Map 4 on p. 30.

Park Hyatt **(p. 16)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Offering luxury for the tech set, this modernistic hotel wows even the most jaded jet-setters with sleek contemporary furnishings, flat-screen TVs, and DVD players in every room. The place is definitely a nice break from the excessive ruffles at the other high-end Chicago hotels.... *Tel 312/335-1234 (800/233-1234). Fax 312/239-4000. www.parkchicago.hyatt.com. 800 N. Michigan Ave., at Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 203 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Peninsula Chicago **(p. 16)** MAGNIFICENT MILE The Peninsula is a mix of understated glamour inspired by 1930's Hong Kong and modern bells and whistles (e.g., a hands-free telephone and TV in every bathroom). Come here if you crave light: Floor-to-ceiling windows in the grand lobby and health club/spa make these spaces especially inviting. Everything here feels brand spanking new, and the service is top-notch (at these prices, it better be!).... *Tel 312/337-2888 (866/288-8889). Fax 312/751-2888. http://chicago.peninsula.com. 108 E. Superior St., between Michigan Ave. and Rush St., Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 339 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Ramada Inn Lakeshore **(p. 23)** HYDE PARK This is a standard high-rise hotel with unexceptional cookie-cutter rooms, but it's your best bet if you want to be near the University of Chicago, the DuSable Museum, and the Museum of Science and Industry. At least there's an outdoor pool, and many rooms have views of the city skyline and the lake.... *Tel 773/288-5800 (800/228-2828). Fax 773/288-5819. www.ramadachicagohotel.com. 4900 S. Lake Shore Dr., at 49th St., Chicago, IL 60615. 184 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

Red Roof Inn **(p. 27)** MAGNIFICENT MILE You're not going to get a room any cheaper than this unless you're willing to stay in a place that rents by the hour—and even then, you won't find one so near Michigan Avenue. All the no-frills rooms were refurbished a few years ago; although the bathrooms are tiny, they're spotless. The service is as close to nonexistent as you can get.... *Tel 312/787-3580 (800/RED-ROOF). Fax 312/787-1299. www.redroof.com. 162 E. Ontario St., between Michigan Ave. and St. Clair St., Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 195 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Renaissance Chicago Hotel (p. 20) THE LOOP This hulking business-traveler hotel sits prominently on the Chicago River; inside it's high glitz, with faux French-provincial furniture, oversize crystal chandeliers, a wishing fountain, uniformed bellhops, and ashtray stands branded with a curlicue "R." Guest rooms have marvelous views but are nothing special in the decor department.... *Tel 312/372-7200 (800/468-3571). Fax 312/372-0093. www.marriott.com. 1 W. Wacker Dr., between State and Dearborn sts., Chicago, IL 60601. State/Lake el stop (Red Line). 553 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

The Ritz-Carlton (p. 18) MAGNIFICENT MILE Located above the windowless, marble-clad behemoth known as Water Tower Place shopping mall, this ultra-deluxe hotel offers handsomely outfitted traditional rooms and a lobby full of plush furniture and endless fresh flowers. Under the same ownership as the Four Seasons Hotel a few blocks away, the Ritz is brighter and just a bit flashier. There's a well-equipped gym facility and small pool, though the hotel charges a daily fee to use them.... *Tel 312/266-1000 (800/621-6906). Fax 312/266-1194. www.fourseasons.com. 160 E. Pearson St., between Michigan Ave. and Mies van der Rohe Way, Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 435 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Sheraton Chicago (p. 21) MAGNIFICENT MILE Along the flower- and shrub-lined Chicago River promenade, this postmodern hotel is a blight, but it succeeds where it really counts, with its interiors and service. The main lobby is all pretty wood trim and huge expanses of glass taking in the gorgeous riverscapes outside; there are separate check-in areas for conventioneers and regular guests to keep everybody out of each other's way. The rooms are pretty standard, in muted peaches, browns, and creams, but they're more comfortable than many rooms in competing hotels. The hotel also has good service, despite its size.... *Tel 312/464-1000 (877/242-2558). Fax 312/464-9140. www.sheratonchicago.com. 301 E. North Water St., at Columbus Dr., Chicago, IL 60611. Grand el stop (Red Line). 1,209 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Sheraton Gateway Suites (p. 28) O'HARE AIRPORT About as generic as possible, this all-suite hotel has one thing going for it: proximity to the airport. Oh, plus Nintendo in every room to help fill the long hours between flights. Otherwise, you get a grim concrete atrium surrounded by drab beige-and-greenish rooms with sofa beds, refrigerator, coffeemaker, and two TVs. There's also a free shuttle to and from O'Hare.... *Tel 847/699-6300 (877/242-2558). Fax 847/699-0391. www.sheraton.com. 6501 N. Mannheim Rd., Rosemont, IL 60018. 297 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

Sofitel Chicago O'Hare (p. 28) O'HARE AIRPORT This hotel will bring you a little bit of French-fried hospitality amid the bland office towers that surround the airport. The marble-floored lobby with its babbling fountain creates a calm, surprisingly un-airportlike atmosphere. Despite the blond wood armoires and floral-print padded headboards, the rooms are pretty average—you certainly won't feel like you've landed in Paris.... *Tel 847/678-4488 (800/SOFITEL). Fax 847/678-4244. www.sofitel.com. 5550 N. River Rd., Rosemont, IL 60018. 300 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

Sofitel Chicago Water Tower (p. 16) MAGNIFICENT MILE Sleek and modern, the Sofitel aims for a younger, cooler clientele than the surrounding conventioneer hotels (Le Bar is popular for late-night drinks, and Café des Architectes attracts a very stylish lunch crowd). Standard guest rooms are on the small side, but the marble bathrooms (with separate shower and tub) get a big thumbs-up.... *Tel 312/324-4000 (800/SOFITEL). Fax 312/324-4026. www.sofitel.com. 20 E. Chestnut St., at Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 415 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

Swissôtel (p. 18) THE LOOP This wedge-shaped, glass-clad tower takes advantage of the views at the far eastern tip of Wacker Drive, a few blocks off Michigan Avenue, but the hotel feels rather isolated. It's exactly what you'd expect from the Swiss: well-ordered, clean, and with all the usual luxury amenities (marble baths). One nice twist: Each room has its own doorbell. Don't miss the bakery stand in the lobby, which serves fabulous European-style pastries and snacks.... *Tel 312/565-0565 (888/737-9477). Fax 312/565-0540. www.swissotel.com. 323 E. Wacker Dr., at Columbus Dr., Chicago, IL 60601. State/Lake el stop (Red Line). 632 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 4 on p. 30.

The Talbott Hotel (p. 20) MAGNIFICENT MILE Built as an apartment building in 1927 and converted to a hotel in 1989, the family-run Talbott offers large rooms with a variety of layouts that include either kitchenettes or full kitchens. The English hunting-themed decor is almost too cutesy, but mostly comes off as warm and comfortable. Complimentary continental breakfast and evening brownies and coffee.... *Tel 312/944-4970 (800/TALBOTT). Fax 312/944-7241. www.talbotthotel.com. 20 E. Delaware Place, at State St., Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 149 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

W Chicago City Center (p. 23) THE LOOP A complete rehab of the former Midland Hotel, this is the Loop's edgiest hotel (not that there's much competition). The two-story lobby bar, lined with

marble columns, feels like a bank that's been taken over by a nightclub. The staff is beautiful, but the rooms are very dark—recommended for night owls rather than light-lovers.... *Tel 312/332-1200 (877/W-HOTELS). Fax 312/917-5771. www.whotels.com. 172 W. Adams St., between LaSalle and Wells sts., Chicago, IL 60603. Quincy el stop (Brown Line) or Monroe el stop (Red Line). 390 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.
See Map 4 on p. 30.

W Chicago Lakeshore **(p. 23)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Formerly a Days Inn, this swanky renovated hotel on Lake Shore Drive offers great views and a stylish restaurant and bar. Take the underpass beneath the busy drive, and you're only a block away from Ohio Street Beach (though you might not swim long in the frigid water). The rooms, decorated in tones of gray and purple, are self-consciously trendy and feel very dark.... *Tel 312/943-9200 (877/W-HOTELS). Fax 312/255-4411. www.whotels.com. 644 N. Lake Shore Dr., between Erie and Ontario sts., Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 556 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

The Westin Chicago River North **(p. 20)** RIVER NORTH Yet another of Chicago's business hotels, the Westin's main selling point is its south-facing rooms, with fantastic views overlooking the river and the Loop. The tranquil lobby features a bamboo garden and the Hana Lounge, which serves sushi as a reminder of the days when this was the Japanese-owned Hotel Nikko.... *Tel 312/744-1900 (877/WESTIN-1). Fax 312/527-2650. www.westinchicago.com. 320 N. Dearborn St., at Kinzie St., Chicago, IL 60610. Grand el stop (Red Line). 424 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

The Whitehall Hotel **(p. 20)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Come here for the personal service, not the amenities. The Whitehall feels like the country house of a wealthy, elderly aunt: tasteful furniture, gold-framed artwork, and narrow hallways with lots of nooks and crannies. The large guest rooms have been recently redecorated, but the overall feel is classic rather than contemporary. Overall, this is a tranquil escape from the bustling streets outside.... *Tel 312/944-6300 (800/948-4255). Fax 312/944-8552. www.slh.com/Whitehall. 105 E. Delaware Place, between Michigan Ave. and Rush St., Chicago, IL 60611. Chicago el stop (Red Line). 221 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 3 on p. 29.

The Willows **(p. 22)** LAKE VIEW Instead of a doorman, this out-of-the-way hotel greets guests with an imposing bust of Louis XIV, or XV, or some other wig-wearing, poufed-up French guy. He adds

just the right loony touch to this small, quirky (and inexpensive) hotel on a sleepy residential Lake View side street. The rooms and suites, though simple, have all the requisite amenities; the famous Ann Sather restaurant provides guests with a free breakfast.... *Tel 773/528-8400 (800/787-3108). Fax 773/528-8483. www.cityinns.com. 555 W. Surf St., between Broadway and Pine Grove Ave., Chicago, IL 60657. Diversey el stop (Brown Line). 36 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 2 on p. 14.

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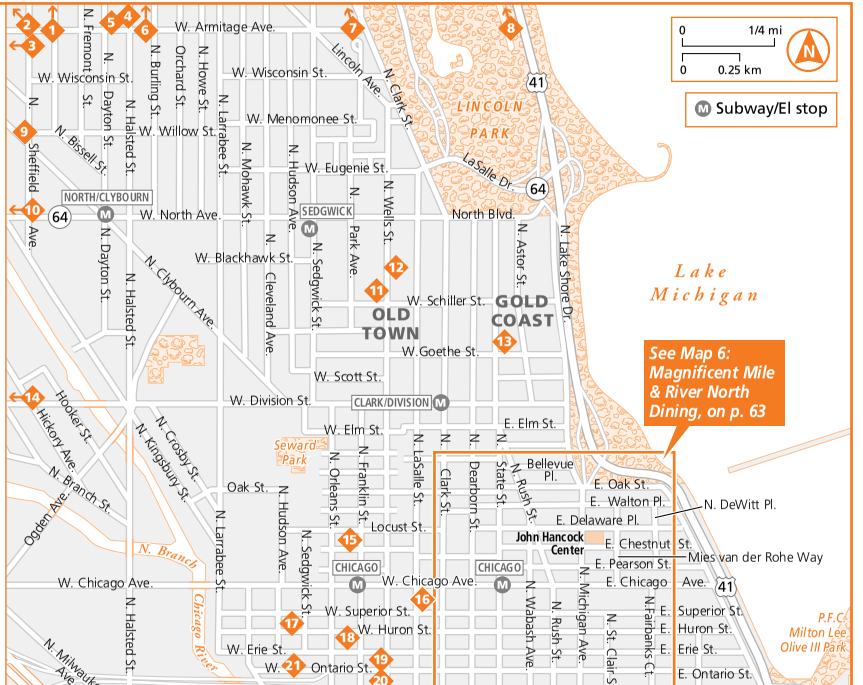
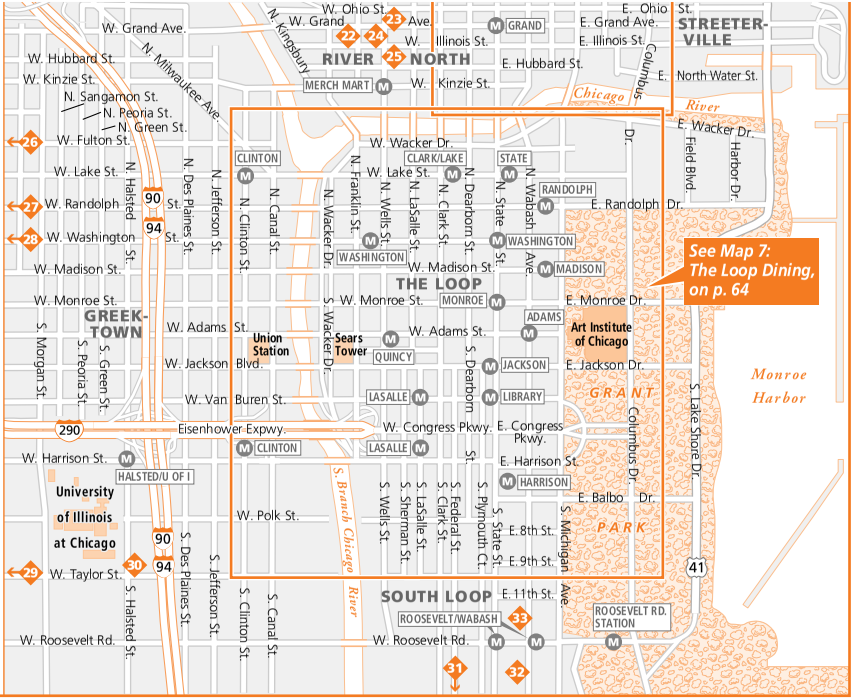
Map 5: Chicago Dining

- Ambria **7**
- Ann Sather **1**
- Arun's **2**
- Bistrot Margot **12**
- Blackbird **27**
- Bongo Room **10**
- Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba! **4**
- Cafe Iberico **16**
- Carson's **20**
- Charlie Trotter's **5**
- Ed Debevic's **19**
- Feast **10**
- Gene & Georgetti **22**
- Gino's East **19**
- Gioco **32**
- Goose Island Brewing Company **9**
- Heartland Café **7**
- Kamehachi **11**
- La Creperie **7**
- La Sardine **28**
- Le Bouchon **3**
- Moti Mahal Indian Restaurant **6**
- Moto **26**
- Nacional 27 **18**
- North Pond **8**
- onesixty blue **27**
- Penang **31**
- Penny's Noodle Shop **1**
- The Phoenix Restaurant **31**
- The Pump Room **13**
- Reza's **21**
- Room 12 **33**
- Rosebud **29**
- Scoozi! **17**
- SushiSamba Rio **24**
- Sushi Wabi **27**
- Tizi Melloul **23**
- Toast **6**
- Wiener Circle **7**
- Wishbone **28**



Lou Malnati's Pizzeria **25**
Marché **27**
Mas **14**
Meritage Café and Wine Bar **2**
Mia Francesca **7, 30**
MK **15**
Mon Ami Gabi **7**



Basic Stuff

The old Chicago stalwarts—deep-dish pizza at **Pizzeria Uno** and **Pizzeria Due,** and steaks and chops "dis thick" at **Gene & Georgetti** still exist, but Chicago chefs (and bartenders, for that matter) have moved way beyond the days when that was all that people wanted. The creative, multi-course gourmet meals served at **Charlie Trotter's** or **Tru** can hold their own against anything you'll find in New York or San Francisco. Authentic Mexican is hot now, led by the success of **Frontera Grill,** as are tapas as served at **Café Iberico.** Thai food made an appearance a decade or so ago and has become one of the city's most reliably consistent cuisines. (For some reason, though, the Chinese food here isn't all that good.) A few hotspots showcase South American-inspired *nuevo latino* cuisine **(Mas, SushiSamba Rio),** but comfort food still reigns supreme: Long-time Italian favorites **(The Italian Village, Rosebud on Taylor)** and cozy French bistros **(Le Bouchon, Bistrot Margot)** are guaranteed to be hopping every Saturday night.

Getting the Right Table

You don't need to worry about greasing the palm of Chicago maître d's—it's not the custom here. And as far as the "right" table goes, the only one to avoid is that one near the bathroom or the kitchen (unless, that is, you've reserved the one in the kitchen, as you can at **Charlie Trotter**). Of course, certain restaurants have truly prime tables—at **Spiaggia,** they're along the windows overlooking Oak Street Beach; at **Gene & Georgetti,** the first-floor tables seem earmarked for special pals of the host. At most restaurants that accept reservations, you should try to make them at least three days in advance. However, at the city's toniest establishments (such as **Tru, Ambria,** and **Spiaggia**) you should make reservations as soon as you plan your trip, no matter how far in advance, and confirm not once, but twice—say a week before and then the day of your planned meal. If you can, leave a phone number where you can be called to confirm (if they can't reach you, they may drop your reservation).

The Lowdown

Institutions... **The Pump Room** no longer attracts the stars—though black-and-white glossies of former patrons line its walls, from Della Reese to Fred MacMurray—but

this historic celebrity haunt still retains something of its old-time glamour. The menu features things like escargot, shrimp bisque, and Caesar salad, just as it did back in 1938 when it opened. Celebrities—even faux celebrities—don't ever show up at **Ann Sather,** but this north side Swedish restaurant has become an institution anyhow, at least for breakfast. Its gooey cinnamon rolls are famous the world round (okay, maybe just in Chicago's 44th Ward, but that's close enough). Speaking of goo, deep-dish pizza was invented in Chicago more than 50 years ago at **Pizzeria Uno,** a dark, almost seedy, but not-to-be-missed pizza joint (with much more character than the myriad branches of the national chain it spawned). The pizza here is a culinary marvel—delicious, overflowing with toppings and cheese, and deservedly famous. Rub elbows with the city's bureaucrats, from judges to parole officers, at **The Berghoff,** which holds city liquor license No. 1; established in the 1890s, it's been in the same Loop location since 1905. Bratwurst, sauerbraten, and corned beef are consumed here by a couple thousand or so hungry businesspeople (and tourists) every day. Illinois isn't exactly synonymous with barbecue, but locals have been heading to **Carson's** for almost 30 years to chow down on the city's best ribs: meaty, tender, and tangy. The **Billy Goat Tavern,** a dive-y newspaper reporters' hangout, achieved immortality by inspiring the famous "cheezeburger, cheezeburger—no Coke, Pepsi" sketches on *Saturday Night Live.* If an institution is a restaurant that's been around a long time, then **La Creperie,** which has been here for more than a quarter-century, surely qualifies. But more than that, it's also a wonderfully charming restaurant, a sweet little soupçon of Paris right on Clark Street, across from a megaplex movie theater and a parking lot. Crepes, obviously, are the raison d'être and are made on an old-fashioned creperie that you can see from the quaint bar area up front.

See-and-be-scenes... In big cities, there are see-and-be-scene restaurants filled with city people, and see-and-be-scene restaurants that were filled with city people when they first opened but are now filled with suburban people looking for city people but only seeing each other, and tourists. Some see-and-be-scene restaurants start out the first way, and, like **Marché,** end up the latter. Marché may

A Spot of Tea

If you're shopping on the Magnificent Mile and feel like having an elegant afternoon tea complete with finger sandwiches, scones, and pastries, head for the stately Palm Court at The Drake, 140 E. Walton Place (Tel 312/787-2200), the cozy Seasons Lounge of the Four Seasons Hotel, 120 E. Delaware Place (Tel 312/280-8800), or The Greenhouse in the Ritz-Carlton, 160 E. Pearson St. (Tel 312/266-1000), in the sunny 12th-floor lobby above the Water Tower Place mall. In the Loop, the appropriately-named Russian Tea Time, 77 E. Adams St. (Tel 312/360-0000), serves tea from 2:30-4:30pm daily.

be hard to get into—still—but once inside, the fantastical interior will make up for any lack of really cool people inside. The food is still good, however, and even though you might not be interested in watching people, they'll still be watching you. For the city-folk-filled places, count on **Blackbird,** with its huge picture window and long, sleek banquette that runs the length of the restaurant, putting everyone on show as if for sale at Neiman's. The crowd at **Mas** is artsy and loud, composed of a combination of creative types and young business whizzes who share a passion for the restaurant's *nuevo latino* cuisine and especially fine exotic drinks. In the end, of course, it depends on who you want to see and by whom you want to be seen. For instance, though some say it's yesterday's restaurant, head to **Bice** at lunchtime if you want to see swank PR and advertising execs cutting deals, elegant thin-as-a-rail women splitting a salad, and lots of European tourists. (At dinner, Bice feeds Chicago's Eurotrash, possibly because the mother ship Bice is a trendsetter in oh-so-trendy Milan.) Besides swarms of folks from its Lake View neighborhood, **Mia Francesca** attracts a model-y crowd. But it's not only the crowd that's hot; so is the food—designer pizzas and pastas that never miss. In Lincoln Park, a bistro called **Mon Ami Gabi** hosts crowds of your basic table-hopping, PalmPilot-using lawyers, business execs, and artists, all of whom, it sometimes seems, know one another. There is also a lot of neck-craning at **Gibson's,** a swinging steakhouse on Rush Street but not typical of Rush Street; it's filled with middle-aged divorcées, cigar-chomping guys wearing huge pinkie rings, sleek trophy-wife wannabes, visiting celebs, and neighborhood

rich people in search of strong drinks from the heavy-handed bartender and steaks the size of Rhode Island.

Deals on meals (under $25)... At **Penang,** you can eat a noodle dish like chow fun for less than $10 or a more expensive dish such as BBQ'd stingray wrapped in banana leaf for twice that much. Either way, you've got a great meal with far more bang for your buck than at many other places (and given the spiciness of many of the dishes, bang is the operative word). Big lazy susans on huge round tables lend the place a Lucille Ball and Henry Fonda *Yours, Mine, and Ours* feel. At the **Mity Nice Grill** everything is, well, mity nice, with mity nice burgers and fries, mity nice homemade pies (well, they taste homemade, at least), mity nice mashed potatoes...you get the picture. Best yet, it's all only a stone's throw from the best shopping on Michigan Avenue (you have to snake through to the back of **foodlife** [p. 70], an upscale mall food court, to get to the Mity Nice Grill). For something a little more upscale, in feel at least, though as close to shopping and in the same price range, try Wolfgang Puck–owned **Puck's at the MCA,** the chic pizza, salad, and sandwich place at the Museum of Contemporary Art. The most gorgeous people in town continue to eat at **Mia Francesca,** not only because gorgeous people like to stick together (though there's that, too), but because of moderate prices and consistently good trattoria food. You'll find more reliable, affordable Italian at **Scoozi!,** a warehouse-size River North restaurant with storefront prices. It, too, attracts a great-looking crowd, albeit a bit on the suburban side. Stay away from the killer margaritas at the **Frontera Grill** and you won't end up spending too much, either—though what you will get is not only the best authentic Mexican food in Chicago, but, according to all the national press attention this place gets, some of the best in these here United States. You really can't spend too much at **Wishbone,** a sprawling Southern-style place in an out-of-the-way location west of the Loop, with hearty country food at country prices. Don't forget dessert—the pecan pie is oh so fine.

Steak your life on it... Steaks (as well as chops) at **Gibson's** are good—and enormous and expensive. Near the Oak Street boutiques, this wood-paneled place is subdued. Its prosperous swingy singles crowd isn't. It's a far less chic

Discovering What's New

To find out more about restaurants that have opened since this book went to press, check out the Chicago Tribune*'s entertainment website at* ***www.metromix.com****, the website for* Chicago *magazine at* ***www.chicagomag.com****, or the entertainment/nightlife website* ***www.chicago.citysearch.com****.*

crowd herding into old-fashioned **Gene & Georgetti** in River North, but judging by the line of big limos with politicos' official license plates, not to mention the chauffeurs loitering out front, it's a no less affluent crowd. The steaks are no less thick and tender, too. You'll find a similar time warp at **Morton's,** tucked away in an undistinguished high-rise and untouched by decorators for years. But the old-school atmosphere, vintage waitstaff, and gut-expanding portions make this place a must for steakaholics.

Decor to die for... Like stepping into an exotic restaurant in Marrakech by way of Gilligan's Island, **Tizi Melloul** is a fun amalgam of strikingly authentic Moroccan design with a Swinging '60s-era influence, as if Tina Louise is about to walk in at any minute wearing a fez. Or is that Barbara Eden shimmying out of her bottle in Cocoa Beach? Well, either way you get the idea. Though there are easier restaurants to get to than **Marché,** this grandly decorated grand bistro, located on Randolph Street's "Restaurant Row," is well worth the cab fare. Wrought metal and lush swaths of velvet fabric make the room look special; it's the closest you'll get to dining on a Cirque de Soleil set. In the Art Nouveau dining room of **Ambria,** across from Lincoln Park, the aesthetics are just right—exquisite flowers, dark paneling, stiff white tablecloths, sparkling china and silver, and fine French food presented as if it were art. **Atwood Café** is a lush throwback to the late 1800s, with richly colored velvet banquettes and grand windows looking out on the bustling Loop. The look is considerably more theatrical at **SushiSamba Rio,** designed by style guru David Rockwell. Think bright lights, bright colors, and a modern take on '70s design (including both a sunken conversation pit and a beaded doorway). It's not the black-and-white glossies of Hollywood's stars of yore that make **The Pump Room** such a lovely space, though their old-fashioned glamour certainly doesn't hurt. Its true glitz comes in the form of gigantic chandeliers, lots of big, round tables

sparkling with crystal, cutlery, and flowers, and a celebratory feeling.

Ethnic eating... With more than 150 items on **Penang's** menu, this sprawling Chinatown restaurant offers food from almost every country in southeast Asia, from Malaysia to Vietnam to Thailand, with Indonesia and Japan thrown in for good measure. Any of the 13 noodle soups, fish porridges, or other exotic entrees, from such winners as Malaysian Buddhist Delight (mixed vegetables with bean curd skin and Chinese mushrooms), to volcano spareribs brought to the table wrapped in flaming foil, to Kari Ayam (chicken and potato seasoned with red curry in a coconut curry), are memorable reminders that there's a big world out there, and a small little slice of it is located in one restaurant in Chicago's Chinatown. Another Chinatown standout (foodwise) is **The Phoenix Restaurant,** known for its popular dim sum lunches (stop by the more casual "Noodle House" downstairs to sample the excellent shrimp dumplings at night). For a Zen experience (at least aesthetically), try **Sushi Wabi,** a hip River West sushi bar that serves all the sushi basics—sashimi, maki rolls, nigiri—and Japanese standbys, like teriyaki and tempura. It all stands out, however, because the atmosphere is so cool and the food is so fresh and beautiful. Giving Sushi Wabi a run for its money is Old Town standout **Kamehachi.** Whether you sit inside, out on the patio, or in the lounge upstairs, the fish is fresh and the prices are reasonable. The *negi hamachi maki* (yellowtail and scallion roll) is excellent, and it's a great place to fill up before checking out some comedy at Zanies or Second City. **Penny's Noodle Shop,** a popular place up in Lake View, has a menu full of pan-Asian dishes (i.e., Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai); their *pad see-uw* (a Thai dish combining chewy noodles, tangy greens, and a sweet soy sauce) is probably the best in the city. If you can put up with the surly waitstaff at **Moti Mahal Indian Restaurant,** this storefront in Lake View will reward you with the best cheap Indian food in a city filled with cheap Indian food. There's no subtlety (or grace, for that matter) at **Heaven on Seven,** where the Cajun specialties are fire-breathing hot. But then, in a cuisine with jalapeños and Tabasco in almost everything, what did you expect? Cheap is the operative word, garlicky the operative flavor at **Cafe Iberico,** an authentic, smoky, raucous

River North tapas bar. Actual Spanish people eat here, which is a good sign. It's mostly tourists and people on dates at Lincoln Park's **Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba!,** which also serves tapas, though at considerably higher prices. Wild game, such as elk, duck, and venison, are the specialties at **The Berghoff,** a hearty wood-paneled German restaurant that's been around for more than a century. Its own beer, called (naturally) Berghoff, is surprisingly good. And for Middle Eastern, I can't get enough of **Reza's,** a sprawling Persian restaurant with a massive menu that goes far beyond kabobs (whatever entree you order, make sure to request the flavorful dill rice).

If al fresco's your style... Stylish **Bistro 110** has an outdoor cafe where you won't be overcome by the French food's garlicky aroma. Instead, you'll have a postcard-perfect view of the Water Tower and Michigan Avenue, not to mention a parade of crazed shoppers schlepping from one store to the next. **Mon Ami Gabi's** outdoor space overlooks the Lincoln Park Conservatory, lending this boisterous bistro one of the more contemplative outdoor views in town. At the **Heartland Cafe,** a mellow, health-food-y place stuck in a 1960s time warp, the front patio tables overlook a sleepy tree-shaded side street in Rogers Park. Avoid the car exhaust and crush of shoppers at the outdoor sidewalk cafe at **Le Colonial** and head for this upscale Vietnamese restaurant's shaded second-floor balcony, where a lucky few get to dine overlooking the sidewalk scene. If manicured lawns and a view of the cobalt-blue lake in the distance are more to your liking, stop in for lunch at **Puck's at the MCA,** the Museum of Contemporary Art's restaurant, and sit outside on the broad terrace (but watch out for bees!). To soak in the Wicker Park scene, grab a table outside at **Feast,** a neighborhood gathering spot that welcomes everyone from young families to clad-in-black hipsters. At **La Creperie,** the outdoor area in the back is filled with tables under bright umbrellas, with twinkling white Christmas lights strung throughout, adding a sparkly Parisian cafe feel. Eating the perfectly prepared crepes (hence the restaurant's name) and drinking a cool glass of rosé make the evening just about perfect.

We never close—well, almost never... When the host at **Cafe Iberico** says the wait for a table is "20 minutes," it

can translate into 5 or 50, depending. Still, it's open late, it's in trendy River North, it's cheap, and it's just the kind of food—tapas—you want at the end of the evening. Chinese food has a way of satisfying those late-night hunger pangs as well, and though most of Chinatown gets pretty dead late at night, the **Phoenix Restaurant**'s downstairs "Noodle House" keeps swinging until midnight and **Penang**—a Malaysian/Japanese spot with one of the most extensive menus around—stays open until 1am. Most of the Loop shuts down after work, but **The Italian Village** welcomes post-theater patrons well after the final curtain calls. At 10pm on Fridays and Saturdays, the center tables at **Nacional 27** are cleared out to make room for a dance floor; the Latin beats will keep your toes tapping as you order more ceviche and another *mojito*. But sometimes there is no better late-night bite than good, greasy hand-cut fries and a burger, both of which are served at the **Wiener Circle** in Lincoln Park, where the short-order cooks behind the counter may scream at you, but it's generally well-meaning: "WHAT DO YOU WANT? FRIES WITH THAT? COME ON, COME ON, FRIES?" The answer should always be yes, no matter what they ask. Everything on that? Yes. Extra salt? Yes, Yes, Yes. These guys are hot dog and hamburger professionals, and if they can't satisfy your late-night hunger, nobody can.

Pizza classics... Chicago is known for its deep-dish pizzas—artery-clogging globs of cheese, rich and chunky tomato sauce, thick crust, and traditional toppings from sausage to olives to onions. Order extra tomatoes and cheese—it's amazingly good. The wait at most of the best pizzerias is long, but you can generally order way before you're seated, so the food will be delivered not long after you hit the table. (That way they can get you in and out as fast as possible.) Try **Pizzeria Uno** or **Pizzeria Due,** around the corner from each other in River North, or a nearby local favorite, **Lou Malnati's.** Another big draw (although fairly touristy) is **Gino's**

Chicago's Pizza

We have three pizza styles in Chicago: Chicago style, also known as deep-dish, which is thick-crusted and often demands a knife and fork; stuffed, which is similar to a pie, with a crust on both top and bottom; and thin crust. Many pizzerias serve both thick and thin, and some make all three kinds.

East; its River North building is relatively new, but the weathered wood tables (where decades of patrons carved their initials and witticisms) were brought along from the restaurant's original location.

The Italian battalion... **Spiaggia,** in its coolly upscale space overlooking Michigan Avenue and the lake, is considered by some folks to be the best Italian restaurant in town (think high-priced gourmet, not spaghetti and meatballs). Down in the Loop, there's Tuscan-flavored **Trattoria No. 10,** a favorite of the business lunch crowd. The food at **Italian Village** is somewhat lost in time (spaghetti Alfredo, anyone?), but the verging-on-tacky Italian-courtyard ambience is priceless. If you insist upon going to Little Italy, you won't be disappointed at **Rosebud,** which is usually jammed (expect a wait, even with a reservation). You'll probably leave with a very full doggie bag in hand. **Mia Francesca** in Lakeview is still the reigning champ of affordable-but-trendy Italian dining. The atmosphere at **Gioco** is loud and happy, like a giant party where you're the guest of honor. And just like in Al Capone's time (the Italian Capone hung around in the area), there's a speakeasy out back, where you can curl up after dinner with a brandy and a big fat stogie. And for quick escapes? As in all good speakeasies, there's a door out back to the alley.

French toast... French travel posters (that look like they were tacked up the day the place opened in 1971) are about all that exists at **La Creperie** to lend it a French-y air, yet more than most other French restaurants in town, this place has a certain indefinable *je ne sais quoi.* It helps, of course, that the crepes, which may be stuffed with any number of things from fish or chicken to caramel and vanilla ice cream, are authentic tasting. One more thing is for sure: Calorie counters...*stay away.* Unlike at La Creperie, which really only serves crepes, **La Sardine**'s menu includes much more than sardines. In fact, while you'll find all the requisite French dishes—bouillabaisse, *côtes d'agneau* (lamb chops), and wonderful dessert soufflés—all prepared perfectly, you'll also find vegetarian paella, roast chicken, and poached salmon. Loud, cheery, and full of savoir faire, La Sardine is the quintessential French bistro. **Ambria** is arguably the

6 Days A Week

Keep in mind that several of the best downtown spots are closed on Sundays.

city's premier French restaurant, however, with its rich, classic dishes, game, truffles, the whole *haute* thing. It's in the Belden Hotel, just across the street from the Lincoln Park Conservatory; across the lobby is **Mon Ami Gabi,** a boisterous and far more casual (and inexpensive) counterpoint serving updated bistro fare. Expect a chic crowd, waitstaff scurrying about in starched aprons, and enough Chanel No. 5 in the air that you'll think you're in Gay Paree. Far less boisterous but no less authentic is **Le Bouchon,** a tiny Bucktown hole-in-the-wall with simple framed pictures of France on the walls and a tin ceiling above. In December, you'll be subjected to really bad holiday music, but otherwise it's Edith Piaf on the Muzak and great French fare on your plate at **Bistro 110,** a handsome, busy Mag Miler. Meals start with a hot 'n' crusty baguette, ramekin of butter, and head of roasted elephant garlic—heaven on earth. At **Brasserie Jo,** in River North, the food is as familiar and comforting as a worn afghan on a chilly winter's afternoon: Coq au vin, bouillabaise, and anything served with white beans are standouts. It's fun eating charcuterie straight from its bright orange pot brimming with sausages and other meats. One suggestion: Order the floating island for dessert.

Isn't it romantic?... onesixty blue is not romantic in the candlelight-and-strolling-violinists sense, but its contemporary look and chic crowd—more than many upscale North Side restaurants, onesixty blue attracts a sizable African-American clientele—make it appropriate for either a coosome dinner-for-two or a large anniversary party. To be romantic, you have to be sexy, and the upfront bar, as perfect for a pre-dinner drink as for a postdinner nightcap, is one of the sexiest in town, with leather banquettes and stools, great mood lighting, and about the prettiest clientele anywhere in town. The romantic mood is also a draw at **Meritage Café,** where the outdoor terrace in back sparkles with twinkling lights (best of all, it's covered and heated in winter, so romance can be had year-round). For an escape from the urban hustle and bustle, head to

North Pond, with a picture-perfect location in Lincoln Park. Since it's not accessible by car, you and your sweetie will have to take a stroll along winding park paths (preferably hand-in-hand) to get there.

Eating solo... The long counter or a cozy table in the back room at **Ann Sather** is a great place to settle in with a book or to just watch the passing crowd of locals, which ranges from funky old guys to leather-clad lesbians. You don't have to like Swedish food—most folks come for the breakfasts, anyway. The curved counter at **Penny's Noodle Shop** on Diversey Parkway is another solo-diner hangout. The loquacious bartenders at stylish French **Bistro 110** are great company when dining alone at the copper-topped bar, ideal for a stop-off during a Mag Mile shopping spree. The arty atmosphere and crowd at **Wishbone** makes eating alone easy, too: You can read, just look around, appear depressed and brooding and in need of Prozac—no one cares. What the place does care about, though, is serving as-authentic-as-possible-in-Chicago Southern home cookin'.

Noshing between galleries... River North's gallery scene can be exhausting. Fortunately there are a bunch of nearby places to rest those weary bones. To satisfy an ethnic craving, there's the chic Mexican favorite **Frontera Grill,** or sprawling **Papagus Greek Taverna,** where the best deal is to sample the long list of hot and cold appetizers. Sometimes the perfect accompaniment for an afternoon of gallery hopping is to go for dinner at an equally hopping place, and **Tizi Melloul,** which sits on a corner on the southern fringes of the River North gallery district, is that place. With an interior as bright and colorful as any canvas you spied at any gallery, the Moroccan cuisine is artfully prepared and presented. Several blocks away, on the area's northern fringe, is **MK,** a chic spot serving contemporary American food at contemporary prices (in other words, if you just bought a $10,000 painting, you can afford to eat here to celebrate).

Near Mag Mile shopping... When schlepping those Crate & Barrel, Marshall Field's, and Cartier bags gets tiring, stop into **Bistro 110,** where the lively atmosphere—not to mention the incredibly garlicky food—will regenerate you. If you're doing that Water Tower Place thing, you really

HOT DOGS

The classic Chicago hot dog includes a frankfurter by Vienna Beef (a local food processor and hallowed institution), heaps of chopped onions and green relish, a slather of yellow mustard, pickle spears, fresh tomato wedges, a dash of celery salt, and, for good measure, two or three "sport" peppers, those thumb-shaped holy terrors that turn your mouth into its own bonfire.

Chicago is home to many standout hot-dog spots such as Gold Coast Dogs, 418 N. State St., at Hubbard Street (Tel 312/527-1222), two blocks off North Michigan Avenue. Fluky's, in The Shops at North Bridge mall at 520 N. Michigan Ave. (Tel 312/245-0702), is part of a local chain that has been serving great hot dogs since the Depression (Dan Aykroyd and Jay Leno are fans). Portillo's, at 100 W. Ontario St. (Tel 312/587-8930), is another local chain that specializes in hot dogs but also serves excellent pastas and salads. Murphy's Red Hots, 1211 W. Belmont Ave. (Tel 773/935-2882), is a neighborhoody spot not too far from Wrigley Field, while The Wieners Circle, in Lincoln Park at 2622 N. Clark St. (Tel 773/477-7444), is a late-night favorite where rude order-takers are part of the shtick.

can't go too wrong at **foodlife,** an upscale mall food court with a health-food-y twist. Want a bit more calm amidst the storm? Park yourself at chic **Le Colonial** for a Bombay gin martini and some simple yet elegant Vietnamese food. Think pre-pre-war Vietnam: Frenchified food, strong drinks, encroaching palm fronds, ceiling fans turning lazily far above your head. It's not easy to find an inexpensive place to eat around here, so no wonder **Johnny Rockets**—a pastiche of a 1950s diner transplanted from L.A.'s Melrose Boulevard—is usually crowded. Tucked on the 6th floor of a mall, **Oak Tree** is bright, lively, and known for its amazingly broad selection (everything from American to Mexican to Asian). A block or so east of Michigan Avenue, inside the Museum of Contemporary Art, lunch at **Puck's at the MCA** on perfectly composed salads, designer pizzas, and architectural sandwiches while overlooking the breathtaking sculpture garden and lake beyond. For a more interior experience, try the **Mity Nice Grill,** a comfort food–serving place also inside the Water Tower shopping mall. The mashed potatoes are incredible, and better yet, since you're still so near all those stores, you can exchange everything you just bought for a size up.

Morning glories... With a fire roaring all winter and beautiful murals covering the walls—not to mention snappy waitresses who barely let you swallow a sip of coffee before

they're there topping it off—it's no wonder that **Ann Sather** has a line for weekend breakfasts snaking down Belmont Avenue. Concerned that your cholesterol is too low? Are your arteries too free-flowing? Could you use a little meat on them there bones? If you answered yes to even one of the above, head on over to **Lou Mitchell's,** which has been around since 1935, for over-the-top hearty breakfasts—omelets, French toast, all the classics. At the West Loop's **Wishbone,** folks happily chow down the Southern-style breakfasts (have some grits with them eggs). Wicker Park's **Bongo Room,** and its South Loop companion **Room 12,** serve up creative breakfast and lunch combos in bright, inviting spaces (don't miss the chocolate French toast). It's a family affair at **Toast,** a breakfast/brunch spot in Lincoln Park that attracts lots of kids (budding artists are encouraged to color on the paper-covered tables).

Absolutely fabulous... Unlike some other hot spots, **one-sixty blue** isn't icy sleek, but comforting-sleek, done up in different shades of oatmeal, brown, and black. The crowd is pretty sleek, as well, very dressy (not coat-and-tie dressy, but designer-trendy dressy), and there to strut its stuff—and its good fortune. Don't let the understated decor of this chic town house restaurant fool you—suave **Charlie Trotter's** pampers its guests in grand style. There's nothing to distract you from the task at hand: being wowed by the food and the service. The international menu's always changing, always fabulous. **Spiaggia**'s floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Lake Michigan add the perfect sparkle to the city's best Italian restaurant. With its elegant Art Nouveau decor, **Ambria** (across from Lincoln Park) is where you want to go for classic French, especially if someone else is paying. Quietly elegant **Everest,** with its panoramic view of the city and its intriguing French-plus cuisine, makes for a luxurious night out. **Tru** impresses with its art-gallery chic dining room and creative prix-fixe meals (try the showstopping Caviar Staircase, where different varieties of caviar are carefully arranged on a custom-designed mini glass stairway). But if you want a truly one-of-a-kind dining experience, head to **Moto,** where chef Homaro Cantu encourages diners to experience food with all their senses. His ingenious presentations include puréed "salad" served in a pipette (to be squeezed directly

into the mouth), and silverware entwined with fresh herbs so the scent wafts toward diners as they eat. Come with an open mind, and you're guaranteed to have a meal you'll be talking about long after you leave town.

Neighborhood favorites... Make time to stroll through Chicago's neighborhoods (an essential part of any visit here), and stop for lunch at a place filled with locals (*not* tourists). After admiring the historic homes in Old Town, replenish your strength with a hearty *steak frites* and glass of wine at **Bistrot Margot,** which looks and feels exactly like a neighborhood bistro should (i.e., cozy, welcoming, loud). Before or after a walk along Armitage Avenue (filled with eclectic home furnishings stores and wealthy young parents showing off their picture-perfect offspring), graze on tapas at **Café Ba-Ba-Reeba!,** a long-time favorite with a lively, casual vibe. Check out the fashion boutiques and sleek home decor shops in Wicker Park and Bucktown, then recover at **Feast,** a local hangout where you can order everything from a turkey burger to an Asian chicken salad to salmon with a Mexican twist (there's even a kids' menu).

Off the eaten track... **Arun's** is way up north, in a residential neighborhood far off the tourist maps. But as home to the best Thai food in the city, it's worth a trek for

Kitchens Up Close

Serious food fans can get a firsthand look at how some of the city's culinary stars work by booking a seat at a chef's table. You'll get a personal tour of the kitchen, a special selection of dishes and—best of all—a front-row seat for dinner-hour drama. At ***Tru*** *(Tel 312/202-0001), four to six people can sit in a glass-enclosed room off the kitchen, where they can check out the scene without feeling the heat. The chef's table at* ***Charlie Trotter's*** *(Tel 773/248-6228) seats four to six right in the kitchen, so diners can catch Trotter's legendary perfectionism up close. The chef's table at Zealous (Tel 312/475-9112) is in the main dining room—but bamboo trees surround it, so other diners won't get jealous when chef Michael Taus stops by for some one-on-one taste tests.*

Chef's tables don't come cheap ($100–$150 per person), but they're a special splurge for die-hard foodies. Just remember to reserve well in advance because these tables book fast.

devoted foodies. No bowls of noodles here; the presentation is exquisite, and the tastes sophisticated. Although **onesixty blue** is at the western edge of Randolph Street's "Restaurant Row," the food and refined atmosphere make it worth the schlep, and if you cab it, the hostess will call you a car for the return trip home. The mostly vegetarian **Heartland Cafe** is in a far-north section of the city, but if you're in the mood for a relaxing time (hippie-style, that is), it's the place to go. Inexpensive Southern home-cooking, served in a casual cavernous space with big paintings of chickens lining the walls, is all that's needed to attract the hipoisie to **Wishbone**'s seriously out-of-the-way location (out-of-the-way unless you work for the *Oprah Winfrey Show,* since her studios are across the street). To really get away from the city, stroll to **North Pond,** tucked in a picturesque setting inside Lincoln Park.

Chicago Treats

Deep-dish pizza may be Chicago's culinary claim to fame, but the city has also added to the national waistline in other ways. Twinkies and Wonder Bread were invented here; Chicago businessman James L. Kraft created the first processed cheese; and Oscar Mayer got his start as a butcher in the Old Town neighborhood.

The children's hour... What could be more kid-friendly than a large, sprawling, loud restaurant in which even the most enthusiastic shrieks, games of tag, and exuberant food fights won't be noticed by the next table, whose inhabitants will likely be involved in their own high jinks? If this sounds good, head to **Penang,** Chinatown's most child-welcoming restaurant. Better yet, the food is fun, messy, and spicy. After a couple of hours of hunting for bargains along Michigan Avenue (wait! bargains and Michigan Ave., now there's a good one), don't hesitate to take the kids to the **Mity Nice Grill,** where burgers and fantastic macaroni-and-gooey-cheese are the menu highlights. **Ann Sather** is casual enough for the kids, but homey-chic enough for the adults. It's located in a former funeral home, which kids find hilarious. Older kids probably will be more than happy at **Ed Debevic's,** a 1950s-themed eatery that's like one long *Happy Days* rerun (younger family members get a kick out of the "sassy" waitresses talking back to Dad). Hot 'n' spicy, messy, and colorful, the Cajun

food at **Heaven on Seven** is about as kid-friendly as a cuisine can get. The location's handy, too, in a movie multiplex right off the Mag Mile. **Goose Island Brewing Company** attracts an all-ages crowd at lunch; parents sample homemade ales while the little ones wolf down hot-from-the-oven pretzels.

Healthful eating... The **Heartland Cafe** is a touch of Santa Cruz in Rogers Park—lots of tofu on the menu, most of it so delicious it could convert you. Peace, love, and live music abound, though the waitstaff could go a little lighter on the patchouli oil. **Reza's** serves its share of heavy meat dishes, but their vegetarian appetizer sampler (homemade hummus, falafel, etc.) makes a delicious, beautifully-presented, good-for-you meal. For upscale vegetarian cuisine, head to **Charlie Trotter's,** where a non-meat prix-fixe meal is offered every night.

Near the theaters... With more than one concentration of theaters in the city, devoted theatergoers have to scout out good choices nearby each. For downtown Loop theaters (including the Goodman), try the upscale comfort food at **Atwood Café,** home-style Italian at **The Italian Village,** or sample the creative wine-food pairings at **Bin 36.** Heading to the Steppenwolf Theatre? A few blocks up the street you'll find **Café Ba-Ba-Reeba!,** a long-time local favorite for tapas, or wash down a hearty portion of meatloaf or fish 'n chips with a home-brewed beer at **Goose Island Brewing Company.** To get a bite before a Second City improv comedy show, head a few blocks south to bustling **Bistrot Margot** or stock up on sushi at **Kamehachi.**

Map 6: Magnificent Mile & River North Dining

Bice **13**
Billy Goat Tavern **21**
Bin 36 **20**
Bistro 110 **7**
Brasserie Jo **19**
foodlife **8**
Frontera Grill **18**
Gene & Georgetti **17**
Gibson's **2**
Heaven on Seven **14**
Johnny Rockets **5**
Le Colonial **3**
Mity Nice Grill **8**
Morton's **1**
Oak Tree **6**
Papagus Greek Taverna **11**
Pizzeria Due **12**
Pizzeria Uno **15**
Puck's at the MCA **9**
Reza's **16**
Spiaggia **4**
Tru **10**

Map 7: The Loop Dining

Atwood Café **4**
The Berghoff **7**
Everest **9**
Gene & Georgetti **2**
Heaven on Seven **5**
The Italian Village **6**
Lou Mitchell's **8**
Reza's **1**
Trattoria No. 10 **3**

The Index

$$$$$	over $50
$$$$	$40–$50
$$$	$30–$40
$$	$20–$30
$	under $20

Price categories reflect the cost of a three-course meal, not including drinks, taxes, and tip.

The following abbreviations are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express
DC	Diners Club
DISC	Discover
MC	MasterCard
V	Visa

Ambria **(p. 48)** LINCOLN PARK *FRENCH* The city's premier French restaurant, with an ever-changing menu that may include melt-in-your-mouth sweetbreads with portobello and endive; Beluga caviar; or pomegranate-glazed squab. Impeccable service and prices to match.... *Tel 773/472-5959. 2300 N. Lincoln Park West., at Belden Ave. Bus 151. Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 6–10pm; Sat 5–10:30pm. $$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Ann Sather **(p. 49)** LAKE VIEW *SWEDISH/BREAKFAST* Homey, yes; cozy, not unless you're in the front room, which, unfortunately, is the smoking section. Although it bills itself as a Swedish restaurant (and you'll still find Swedish potato sausage, Swedish meatballs, and sandwiches on limpa bread on the menu), it's also a popular breakfast/brunch spot, with the usual mix of omelets, pancakes, and baked goodies (don't miss the cinnamon rolls). There are also three Ann Sather Cafés throughout Chicago.... *Tel 773/348-2378. www.annsather.com. 929 W. Belmont Ave., between Clark St. and Sheffield Ave. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 7am–9pm. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Arun's **(p. 61)** NORTH SIDE *THAI* Tucked in a residential neighborhood far from the tourist hoards, Arun's is worth the trip for anyone serious about Thai cuisine; it's definitely the best Thai

restaurant in the city (and probably in the U.S., too). And another bonus is that you don't have to worry about picking the best dish on the menu, since all meals here are 12-course prix-fixe feasts. Not only will your mouth burst with new tastes, you'll be dazzled by plate presentations that are both beautiful and whimsical.... *Tel 773/539-1909. 4156 N. Kedzie Ave., at Irving Park Rd. Take a cab. Reservations required (credit card number must be provided when reservation is made). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 5–10pm. $$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Atwood Café **(p. 52)** THE LOOP *AMERICAN* The decor lives up to its setting in the historic Hotel Burnham: The rich velvet upholstery in lush colors conjures up a late-Victorian elegance. But the menu is firmly rooted in the present, emphasizing modern takes on American classics (duck quesadillas, hearty potpies). Fruit lovers with a sweet tooth shouldn't miss the dessert cobblers.... *Tel 312/368-1900. 1 W. Washington St., at State St. Washington el stop (Red Line) or Madison el stop (Brown Line). Pre-theater reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 7am–10pm; Sat–Sun 8am–10pm. $$$*

See Map 7 on p. 65.

The Berghoff **(p. 49)** THE LOOP *GERMAN* This old-timey oak-paneled German restaurant decorated with murals and stained glass attracts hordes at lunchtime, chowing down on hand-carved roast beef, turkey, and corned beef sandwiches in the stand-up bar. Classic wiener schnitzel, sauerbraten, and apple strudel in the vast dining room are your best bets.... *Tel 312/427-3170. www.berghoff.com. 17 W. Adams St., between State and Dearborn sts. Adams el stop (Red Line). AE, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–9pm; Fri 11am–9:30pm; Sat 11:30am–10pm. $$*

See Map 7 on p. 65.

Bice **(p. 50)** MAGNIFICENT MILE *ITALIAN* Despite the pretension, this restaurant has all the regular Italian dishes you'd expect and some you wouldn't, like pasta in pesto with green beans and potatoes.... *Tel 312/664-1474. www.bicechicago.com. 158 E. Ontario St., between Michigan Ave. and St. Clair St. Chicago el stop (Red Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–10pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–10:30pm; Sun 11:30am–9:30pm. $$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Billy Goat Tavern **(p. 49)** MAGNIFICENT MILE *AMERICAN* Within a block of both the *Sun-Times* and the *Chicago Tribune,* this dive—and that's a charitable description—is a media hangout, its walls covered with scores of sepia-tinted newspaper clippings. Greasy but delicious burgers are about the only thing worth eating.... *Tel 312/222-1525. 430 N. Michigan Ave., between Illinois and Hubbard sts. Grand el stop (Red Line). Reservations not accepted. No credit cards. Mon–Fri 7am–2am; Sat 10am–2am; Sun 11am–2am. $*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Bin 36 **(p. 63)** RIVER NORTH *AMERICAN* Intimidated by wine snobs? Bin 36 can introduce you to the joy of a perfect wine-food pairing—without the attitude. Whether you grab an appetizer-size "small plate" at the casual Tavern, or order from the more upscale Cellar menu, all dishes are listed with recommended wines, and the taste combinations can be truly extraordinary. For the full experience, splurge on the four-course prix-fixe menu.... *Tel 312/755-9463. www.bin36.com. 339 N. Dearborn St., between Kinzie St. and the Chicago River. Grand el stop (Red Line). Reservations recommended on weekends. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–noon; Fri 11am–1:30am; Sat noon–1:30am; Sun noon–10pm. $$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Bistro 110 **(p. 54)** MAGNIFICENT MILE *FRENCH* This is a stylish bistro with a wicker-chaired garden room, great bar, and energetic dining room, just off the Mag Mile. Try the great roasted red snapper, if they have it, or one of the wonderful garlicky pastas or the half-chicken.... *Tel 312/266-3110. 110 E. Pearson St., between Michigan Ave. and Rush St. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Wed 11:30am–10pm; Thurs–Sat 11:30am–11pm; Sun 10am–10pm. $$$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Bistrot Margot **(p. 48)** OLD TOWN *FRENCH* Busy, bustling, popular with the locals...this place has the classic bistro vibe. Stay away if you're looking for a secluded table for two, but don't miss it if you've been craving the perfect steak frites or escargot soaking in garlic butter.... *Tel 312/587-3660. www.bistrotmargot.com. 1437 N. Wells St., between North Ave. and Schiller St. Sedgwick el stop (Brown Line). Reservations recommended on weekends. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon 11:30am–9pm; Tues–Thurs 11:30am–10pm; Fri 11:30am–11pm; Sat 10:30am–11pm; Sun 10:30am–9pm. $$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Blackbird **(p. 50)** WEST LOOP *AMERICAN* As the name implies, wear black and be prepared to eat like a bird, because the food at this sleek, stark black, white, and polished steel contemporary American restaurant comes in way-small portions. Under most circumstances that's a drag, but here it's an opportunity to taste more things (provided you've got an unlimited budget). The tables are so close together you may be tempted to try things your neighbors ordered—and don't even think of going to the bathroom if you're on the banquette side of the table.... *Tel 312/715-0708. www.blackbirdrestaurant.com. 619 W. Randolph St., between Jefferson and Des Plaines sts. Take a cab. Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10:30pm; Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–11:30pm; Sat 5:30–11:30pm. $$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Bongo Room (p. 60) WICKER PARK *AMERICAN* This brightly colored, cozy spot draws a steady stream of locals with its mix of creative breakfast/lunch dishes. New interpretations of breakfast basics are the lure, such as chocolate French toast or the crab club sandwich. Open for breakfast and lunch only; your best bet is to stop by on a weekday, because the weekend brunch crowds mean long waits.... *Tel 773/489-0690. 1470 N. Milwaukee Ave., between Honore St. and Evergreen Ave. Damen el stop (Blue Line). Reservations not accepted. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 8am–2:30pm; Sat–Sun 9:30am–2:30pm. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Brasserie Jo (p. 57) RIVER NORTH *FRENCH* A perfect re-creation of a Parisian hot spot, right down to the piped-in accordion music, this restaurant serves authentic brasserie dishes like Alsatian onion tarts and onion soup.... *Tel 312/595-0800. www.brasseriejo.com. 59 W. Hubbard St., between Clark and Dearborn sts. Grand el stop (Red Line). Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 5:30–10:30pm; Sat 5–11pm; Sun 5–10pm. $$$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba! (p. 54) OLD TOWN *SPANISH* Here, the boisterous, jammed-with-young-singles atmosphere is a lot of fun, and the food on the ever-evolving menu—from the tortilla española to the marinated octopus to the full meals (such as paella)—is nearly as good as a trip to the Costa del Sol.... *Tel 773/935-5000. www.cafebabareeba.com. 2024 N. Halsted St., between Dickens St. and Armitage Ave. Armitage el stop (Brown Line). Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs noon–10pm; Fri–Sat noon–midnight. $$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Cafe Iberico (p. 48) RIVER NORTH *SPANISH* This is a real tapas bar—sprawling, raucous, loud, and crowded. Great shrimp dishes, tortilla española, baked goat cheese, and terrific pitchers of sangria add to the party atmosphere.... *Tel 312/573-1510. www.cafe-iberico.com. 739 N. LaSalle St., between Chicago Ave. and Superior St. Chicago el stop (Brown Line). Reservations accepted only for groups of 6 or more (no reservations accepted for Fri–Sat dinner). DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–11pm; Fri 11am–1:30am; Sat noon–1:30am; Sun noon–11pm. $$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Carson's (p. 49) RIVER NORTH *AMERICAN* A genuine Chicago institution, this is the place the locals go for tender, fall-off-the-bone ribs. A true carnivore's delight, Carson's also barbecues chicken, pork chops, and salmon (if you insist on being healthy). Expect massive portions, lots of families, and an old-school *atmosphere.... Tel 312/280-9200. www.ribs.com. 612 N. Wells St., between Ohio and Ontario sts. Erie St. Grand el stop (Red Line). Reservations*

accepted for groups of 6 or more. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–11pm; Fri 11am–12:30am; Sat noon–12:30am; Sun noon–11pm. $$$

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Charlie Trotter's (p. 48) OLD TOWN *AMERICAN/ECLECTIC* If not the best restaurant in Chicago, this one certainly gets called the best most often. The $120-a-person prix-fixe might include Maine lobster with preserved papaya, scallops, and foie gras, California pigeon breast with spring vegetables, and on and on.... *Tel 773/248-6228. www.charlietrotters.com. 816 W. Armitage Ave., between Halsted and Dayton sts. Armitage el stop (Brown Line). Reservations required. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 6–10pm. $$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Ed Debevic's (p. 62) RIVER NORTH *AMERICAN* This homage to the 1950s must've taken a dozen high-priced creative directors to dream up. The food is all delish, cheapish, and fattening. But hey, who knew from diets in the fifties, anyhow?.... *Tel 312/664-1707. 640 N. Wells St., at Ontario St. Grand el stop (Red Line). Reservations not accepted. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–9pm; Fri–Sat 11am–11pm. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Everest (p. 60) THE LOOP *FRENCH* Take the elevator 40 stories up from the Chicago Stock Exchange and treat yourself to an exceptional French meal accented with North American ingredients such as Maine lobster and Texas venison.... *Tel 312/663-8920. 440 S. LaSalle St., at Congress Pkwy. Adams el stop (Red Line) or LaSalle/Van Buren (Brown Line). Reservations required. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Thurs 5:30–9:30pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–10pm. $$$$$*

See Map 7 on p. 65.

Feast (p. 54) WICKER PARK *AMERICAN* The once-grungy neighborhood of Wicker Park is well on its way to gentrification, but Feast is a welcome respite from the surrounding chic boutiques. You'll see every type here: On sunny days, groups of friends and young families pack the patio; by night, couples gaze at each other over candlelit tables. Comfort food rules the menu, from the pot-pie of the day to the pork chops and pumpkin ravioli.... *Tel 773/772-7100. 1616 N. Damen Ave., at North Ave. Damen el stop (Blue Line). AE, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–3pm and 5:30–10pm; Fri 11:30am–3pm and 5:30–11pm; Sat 9am–3pm and 5:30–11pm; Sun 9am–3pm and 5–9pm. $$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

foodlife (p. 51) MAGNIFICENT MILE *ECLECTIC* The grand pasha of mall "food courts," this 13-station food-o-rama at Water Tower Place offers a spread that includes rotisserie chicken, stir-fries,

pastas, tofu burgers, tacos and burritos, and great desserts. There's beer and wine, as well.... *Tel 312/335-3663. 835 N. Michigan Ave. (in Water Tower Place), between Pearson and Chestnut sts. Chicago el stop (Red Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–8pm; Fri–Sat 11am–9pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Frontera Grill **(p. 48)** RIVER NORTH *MEXICAN* This award-winning Mexican restaurant in River North is about as authentic as it gets, with a weekly changing menu of delightfully nongreasy, non-taco dishes in a setting complete with colorful artwork, wooden tables, and bright Southwest-inspired walls.... *Tel 312/661-1434. www.fronterakitchens.com. 445 N. Clark St., between Illinois and Hubbard sts. Grand el stop (Red Line) or Merchandise Mart (Brown Line). Reservations accepted only for groups of 5–10. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Thurs 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–10pm; Fri 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–11pm; Sat 10:30am–2:30pm and 5–11pm. $$$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Gene & Georgetti **(p. 48)** RIVER NORTH *STEAKS* In the shadow of the el tracks, this dark, old-fashioned, two-level steakhouse specializes in aged prime steak. Many judges and local politicians eat here regularly—which is a pretty good endorsement.... *Tel 312/527-3718. www.geneandgeorgetti.com. 500 N. Franklin St., at Illinois St. Merchandise Mart el stop (Brown Line). Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–midnight. $$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.
See Map 6 on p. 64.
See Map 7 on p. 65.

Gibson's **(p. 50)** MAGNIFICENT MILE *STEAKS* Here you'll find huge booths, dark paneling, big ferns, and good lighting. Try the steaks, of course, from porterhouse to T-bone, sirloin to filet mignon, but don't skip well-prepared fish dishes either. There are also great baked potatoes, slathered in sour cream, naturally.... *Tel 312/266-8999. www.gibsonssteakhouse.com. 1028 N. Rush St., at Bellevue Place. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Reservations strongly recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–midnight. $$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Gino's East **(p. 55)** RIVER NORTH *PIZZA* Really good pizza. Really long lines. Definitely a tourist destination, but the deep-dish pizza here is the real thing.... *Tel 312/943-1124. 633 N. Wells, between Erie and Ontario sts. Grand el stop (Red Line). Reservations not accepted. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–9pm; Fri–Sat 11am–midnight; Sun noon–9pm. $$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Gioco (p. 56) SOUTH LOOP *ITALIAN* Located in what is one of the city's hottest new neighborhoods—hey, the mayor lives a few blocks away and even stops in here once in a while—this Italian restaurant, with its open kitchen and thumping music, is a fun out-of-the-way place to dine. The menu includes shitake pizza, grilled calamari, various well-prepared pastas, and an already-famous chicken Vesuvio (its thigh and leg bone stick up like the volcano itself). After dinner, visit the velvet-draped drinks room in the back, appropriately called "the speakeasy."... *Tel 312/939-3870. www.gioco-chicago.com. 1312 S. Wabash St., at 13th St. Roosevelt el stop (Red Line); take a cab at night. Reservations recommended. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Wed 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–10pm; Thurs 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–11pm; Fri 11:30am–2:30pm and 5pm–midnight; Sat 5pm–midnight; Sun 5–10pm. $$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Goose Island Brewing Company (p. 63) OLD TOWN *AMERICAN* A family-friendly brewery? Believe it. By night, Goose Island attracts your standard single beer-drinking crowd, but daytime lunches and Sunday brunch bring out the parents and kids—so feel free to bring Junior in (doesn't anyone traveling with children deserve to relax with a cold beer?). Don't miss the homemade pretzels and seasoned potato chips, and if you can't decide which ale to order, go with a sampler.... *Tel 312/915-0071. www.gooseisland.com. 1800 N. Clybourn Ave., at Sheffield Ave. North/Clybourn el stop (Red Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Dining room open daily 11am–10pm; bar open until 1am Sun–Thurs and 2am Fri–Sat. $$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Heartland Café (p. 54) ROGERS PARK *AMERICAN* A restaurant strong on vegetarian options, this place has terrific omelets and stir-fries, decent pasta dishes, and burgers made from farm-raised buffalo meat. Live music most nights; there's a health food store attached, too.... *Tel 773/465-8005. www.heartlandcafe.com. 7000 N. Glenwood Ave., at Lunt Ave. Morse el stop (Red Line); take a cab at night. No credit cards. Mon–Thurs 7am–10pm; Fri 7am–11pm; Sat 8am–11pm; Sun 8am–10pm. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Heaven on Seven (p. 53) MAGNIFICENT MILE/THE LOOP *CAJUN* From the second floor of a cinema complex off Michigan Avenue, this raucous joint whips up authentic Cajun food—hoppin' John (black-eyed peas and andouille sausage), fried catfish, fried oysters, and jambalaya (skip the tacky souvenir shop). The original Loop location is a no-frills lunch spot.... *Magnificent Mile: Tel 312/280-7774; www.heavenonseven.com; 600 N. Rush St., at Ohio St.; Grand el stop (Red Line); Sun–Thurs 11am–10pm, Fri–Sat 11am–11pm, Sun 11am–2pm. Reservations accepted.*

AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Loop: Tel 312/263-6443; 111 N. Wabash Ave., at Washington St.; Washington el stop (Red Line) or Madison el stop (Brown Line); Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat 10am–3pm. Reservations not accepted. No credit cards. $$

See Map 6 on p. 64
See Map 7 on p. 65

The Italian Village (p. 48) THE LOOP *ITALIAN* A downtown landmark, the Village has been serving up Italian-American dishes since 1927. The building also houses two other restaurants (a seafood-focused trattoria and the upscale Vivere), but the Village offers a classic blast from the past, with its midnight-blue ceiling, twinkling "stars," and banquettes tucked into private, cave-like little rooms. The food is good rather than great, but the service (featuring many waiters who seem to have been here since it opened) is first-rate. The staff is especially experienced at getting people in and out the door before a downtown show.... *Tel 312/332-7005. www.italianvillage-chicago.com. 71 W. Monroe St., between Dearborn and Clark sts. Monroe el stop (Red Line) or Adams el stop (Brown Line). Reservations recommended, especially pre-theater. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–midnight; Fri–Sat 11am–1am; Sun noon–midnight. $$$*

See Map 7 on p. 65.

Johnny Rockets (p. 59) MAGNIFICENT MILE *AMERICAN* A burger-and-fries joint that recreates the mood of a 1950s-era diner, this place is red and black and white all over, with mini jukeboxes at each booth—you get the picture.... *Tel 312/337-3900. 901 N. Rush St., at Delaware Place. Clark/Division el stop (Red Line). Reservations not accepted. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 7am–10pm; Fri–Sat 7am–midnight. $*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Kamehachi (p. 53) OLD TOWN *SUSHI* This is one of the top three places for sushi in Chicago. If you like your sushi experience straight up, sit in the main dining area. Socialites and wannabe-hipsters head upstairs to the second-floor lounge/dining room. Either way, the sushi is melt-in-your-mouth good.... *Tel 312/664-3663. www.kamehachi.com. 1400 N. Wells, at Schiller St. Sedgwick el stop (Brown Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5pm–2am; Sat 11:30am–3pm and 5pm–2am; Sun 5pm–midnight. $$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

La Creperie (p. 49) LAKE VIEW *FRENCH* Referring to this restaurant as an old Chicago stalwart makes it sound like, well, an old Chicago stalwart, but it has been around for more than a quarter-century and the menu, all crepes, is pretty old-fashioned as well. There isn't a low-fat, low-sodium, low-anything in sight. But oh, it's all so *trés cher,* really!... *Tel 773/528-9050. 2845 N. Clark*

St., at Diversey Ave. Diversey el stop (Brown Line). Reservations accepted for groups of 6 or more. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Fri 11:30am–3:30pm and 5–11pm; Sat 11am–11pm; Sun 11am–9:30pm. $$

See Map 5 on p. 46.

La Sardine **(p. 56)** WEST LOOP *FRENCH* From its name you'd think this French bistro would be the size of a tin of fish, but in fact it's quite airy and bright, and across the street from Harpo Studios, where Oprah tapes. Traditional fare such as *brandade de morue* (cod fish), *côtes d'angneau rot* (rack of lamb), *salade de chèvre chaud* (warm goat cheese salad), and bouillabaisse highlight the menu. Pricey wine list, though.... *Tel 312/421-2800. 111 N. Carpenter St., between Randolph and Washington sts. Bus 65 (Grand Ave.), or take a cab. Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–10pm; Fri 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–11pm; Sat 5–11pm. $$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Le Bouchon **(p. 48)** BUCKTOWN *FRENCH* Zis is really one of ze best (cheap-ish) Frunch bistros in town. Delicious steak frites, cassoulet, great onion tart, *d'accord,* and chicken dishes.... *Tel 773/862-6600. 1958 N. Damen Ave., at Armitage Ave. Damen el stop (Blue Line). Reservations strongly recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5:30–11pm; Fri–Sat 5pm–midnight. $$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Le Colonial **(p. 54)** MAGNIFICENT MILE *VIETNAMESE* This upscale (i.e., pricey) restaurant serves the best Vietnamese in town. The attitude-free staff explains how to eat some of the more exotic dishes, like shrimp paste wrapped around sugar cane.... *Tel 312/255-0088. 937 N. Rush St., between Oak and Walton sts. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Reservations recommended. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 5–11pm; Sat noon–2:30pm and 5pm–midnight; Sun noon–2:30pm and 5–10pm. $$$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Lou Malnati's Pizzeria **(p. 55)** RIVER NORTH *PIZZA* Not a fixture on the tourist radar (like nearby Pizzeria Uno and Due), Lou Malnati's depends on its loyal crowd of local customers. What makes their deep-dish pizza special is the hearty, tasty cornmeal-based crust. While some other deep-dish pizzas are mostly cheese with a few other ingredients sprinkled in, Lou Malnati's keeps the cheese layer modest, so you can actually taste the other toppings.... *Tel 312/828-9800. 439 N. Wells St., between Illinois and Hubbard sts. Merchandise Mart el stop (Brown Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–11pm; Fri–Sat 11am–midnight; Sun noon–10pm. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Lou Mitchell's (p. 60) THE LOOP *BREAKFAST* A Chicago breakfast institution, this place serves the definitive "hearty" breakfast, with homemade breads and cakes, omelets oozing butter and cheese, and great stacks of pancakes and French toast. Expect long lines.... *Tel 312/939-3111. 565 W. Jackson Blvd., between Clinton and Jefferson sts. Quincy/Wells el stop (Brown Line). Reservations not accepted. No credit cards. Mon–Sat 5:30am–3pm; Sun 7am–3pm. $*

See Map 7 on p. 65.

Marché (p. 49) WEST LOOP *FRENCH* Yes, there's paillard of this and gratinée of that on the menu at this grandly decorated bistro, but the chef here uses French cuisine merely as inspiration. Try the aromatic couscous with grilled vegetables, the haricots verts with fennel and tomato, or any of the spectacular desserts.... *Tel 312/226-8399. www.marche-chicago.com. 833 W. Randolph St., at Green St. Bus 65 (Grand Ave.), or take a cab. Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Wed 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10pm; Thurs 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–11pm; Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5:30pm–midnight; Sat 5:30pm–midnight; Sun 5:30–10pm. $$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Mas (p. 48) WICKER PARK *LATIN AMERICAN* This restaurant is unbelievably good. They call it *nuevo latino* dining, blending old world techniques with new world influences, which translates to such incredible dishes as molasses-and-mango-seared duck, chili-cured roasted pork tenderloin, lime-marinated tuna loin, and chicken and tequila stew. The yucca fries are to die for, and, best yet, the *mojito* (rum, soda water, and mortar-and-pestled mint) is the best drink this side of Havana. Seriously, one sip and you'll think you're Desi Arnaz. Mambo!... *Tel 773/276-8700. www.masrestaurant.com. 1670 W. Division St., at Paulina St. Division el stop (Blue Line). Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5:30–10:30pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm. $$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Meritage Café and Wine Bar (p. 57) BUCKTOWN *AMERICAN* The food here is the usual upscale American, seasonal-ingredients mix—the real draw is the romantic patio. Lit by overhead lights, the entire space is covered and heated in winter, so you won't have to wait for good weather to enjoy the atmosphere. Don't forget to try a glass of the restaurant's namesake wine; the servers can also point the way to the best food-wine pairings.... *Tel 773/235-6434. www.meritagecafe.com. 2118 N. Damen Ave., at Charleston St. Damen el stop (Blue Line). Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5:30–10pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm; Sun 11am–2pm and 5–9pm. $$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Mia Francesca **(p. 50)** LAKE VIEW/LITTLE ITALY *ITALIAN* About as sizzling as sizzling restaurants in Chicago get, this sparely adorned trattoria has managed to stay hot thanks to moderate prices and consistently good food. The menu changes daily (if there's a fish special—try it).... *Lake View: Tel 773/281-3310; www.miafrancesca.com; 3311 N. Clark St., between Aldine Ave. and Buckingham St.; Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line); reservations recommended; Sun–Thurs 5–10pm, Fri–Sat 5–11pm. Little Italy: Tel 312/829-2828; 1400 W. Taylor St., at S. Loomis St.; take a cab; reservations recommended; Mon–Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5–10pm, Sat 5pm–11pm and Sun 5–9pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V; $$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Mity Nice Grill **(p. 51)** MAGNIFICENT MILE *AMERICAN* The name says it all: This cheery, 1940s-style restaurant, way in the back of the first floor of Water Tower Place (the mega-shopping mall on Michigan Ave.), serves perfect comfort food—ideal after a day of schlepping through Gap, Banana Republic, and Marshall Field's—such as macaroni and cheese, meatloaf, perch fry, and roast turkey.... *Tel 312/335-4745. 835 N. Michigan Ave. (Water Tower Place), between Pearson and Chestnut sts. Chicago el stop (Red Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–9pm; Fri–Sat 11am–10pm. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

MK **(p. 58)** RIVER NORTH *AMERICAN* Fortunately, the food at this sophisticatedly lit, bi-level restaurant is as good as the drippingly cool surroundings are chic. It's the kind of place that serves truffle cream with its fries, roast apple in its carrot soup, grilled Vidalia onions with its foie gras, and 25-year-old balsamic vinegar with its liver. If it all sounds dramatic, it is. ***Note:*** They're a bit chintzy on the amount of wine they pour when you order by the glass.... *Tel 312/482-9179. www.mkchicago.com. 868 N. Franklin St., at Chestnut St. Chicago el stop (Brown Line). Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 5:30–10pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm. $$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Mon Ami Gabi **(p. 50)** LINCOLN PARK *FRENCH* Here, they put a warm crusty loaf of bread right on the table, no polite basket, no pretense. Just the *pain* and a little pot of *beurre,* which pretty much describes the general earthiness of this genuine French bistro, located across the street from the glorious Lincoln Park Conservatory. *Soupe à l'oignon* and steak frites are typical choices here, though there are nightly specials, which may range from a *salmon en croute* (salmon in pastry with a layer of salmon mousse in between) to bouillabaisse. Excellent desserts, too; try the sour cream sorbet if they have it.... *Tel 773/348-8886. www.monamigabi.com. 2300 N. Lincoln Park West, at Belden Ave.*

Bus 151. Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5:30–10pm; Fri–Sat 5–11pm; Sun 5–9pm. $$$

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Morton's (p. 52) MAGNIFICENT MILE *STEAKS* Okay it's now a national chain, but Chicagoans consider Morton's their "hometown" steakhouse. The portions are huge and calorie-laden (and delicious), the waitstaff vintage, and the decor hasn't changed in 30 years. All of which makes it a perfect escape for anyone tired of trendy, "hot" restaurants.... *Tel 312/266-4820. www.mortons.com. 1050 N. State St., between Bellevue Place and Elm St. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5:30–11pm; Sun 5–10pm. $$$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Moti Mahal Indian Restaurant (p. 53) LAKE VIEW *INDIAN* The crowds packing into Moti Mahal's storefront space say it all. Tandooris excel; so do vegetarian dishes like *aloo gabhi* (potato and cauliflower in a gingery sauce) and *sag paneer* (spinach and home made cheese). In exchange for low prices, however, you also get service with a sneer. BYOB.... *Tel 773/348-4392. 1031 W. Belmont Ave., at Kenmore Ave. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily noon–10pm. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Moto (p. 60) WEST LOOP *ECLECTIC* Chef Homaro Cantu wows diners with custom-made silverware and serving pieces that present food in a whole new way (example: fish that cooks in a box right at the table). You're guaranteed to be surprised, impressed, and even amazed.... *Tel 312/491-0058. www.motorestaurant.com. 945 W. Fulton Market Ave., at Sangamon St. Take a cab. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5–10pm. $$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Nacional 27 (p. 55) RIVER NORTH *LATIN AMERICAN* The menu showcases the cuisine of 27 Latin American nations, including Venezuela, Argentina, and Brazil (see if you can name the other 24). But the space evokes the spirit of a glamorous 1930s Havana nightclub, with semicircular booths, gauzy floor-to-ceiling drapes, and an overall sultry mood. Things really liven up after 10pm on Fridays and Saturdays, when a DJ starts spinning Latin tunes and couples take over the dance floor in the center of the room. The menu offers the full range of *nuevo latino* favorites, but those with sensitive taste buds should be forewarned: Some of the entrees are hot, hot, hot.... *Tel 312/664-2727. 325 W. Huron St., between Franklin and Orleans sts. Chicago el stop (Brown Line). Reservations recommended on weekends. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5:30–9:30pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm; bar open until 2am Fri–Sat. $$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

North Pond (p. 58) LINCOLN PARK *AMERICAN* Tucked away in the park not far from Lincoln Park Zoo, North Pond offers a distinctly non-urban experience. The building's Arts and Crafts–inspired interior blends perfectly with the park outside, and a recently added glass-enclosed addition lets you dine "outside" all year long. The contemporary American menu emphasizes organic, locally grown ingredients and favors simple preparations—although the overall result is definitely upscale (at these prices, it better be).... *Tel 773/477-5845. www.northpondrestaurant.com. 2610 N. Cannon Dr., between Fullerton Ave. and Diversey Pkwy. Bus 151, or take a cab. Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 5:30–10pm; Sun 11am–2pm and 5:30–10pm. $$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Oak Tree (p. 59) MAGNIFICENT MILE *ECLECTIC* Tucked away on the sixth floor of the ritzy 900 N. Michigan indoor mall (home of Bloomingdale's and Gucci), Oak Tree isn't exactly high-profile. But the cheery, bright atmosphere makes it a welcoming spot for a shopping break (try to snag one of the window tables overlooking Michigan Ave.). The incredibly varied menu includes everything from sandwiches and salads to Asian noodles and Mexican quesadillas.... *Tel 312/751-1988. 900 N. Michigan Ave., 6th floor, between Walton St. and Delaware Place. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Reservations not accepted. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 7:30am–6:30pm; Sat–Sun 7:30am–5:30pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

onesixty blue (p. 57) WEST LOOP *FRENCH/AMERICAN* This Adam Tihany–designed shhhhhhhh-Michael-Jordan-is-a-silent-partner restaurant has been through some changes in the kitchen; the current chef favors modern takes on French cuisine (the do-not-miss-dish is the duck confit appetizer). Unlike other hip spots, the mood here is tranquil (it's unlikely you'll overhear other tables' conversations), and though the price tag is high, the sophisticated peace and quiet and suave service may be worth it.... *Tel 312/850-0303. www.onesixtyblue.com. 160 N. Loomis St., at Randolph St. Take a cab. Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri–Sat 5–11pm; Sun 5–9pm. $$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Papagus Greek Taverna (p. 58) RIVER NORTH *GREEK* The Greek decorations may be slightly on the kitschy side, but the food here is pretty good—your basic moussaka, spanakopita, and baklava. It's busy, noisy, dimly lit, and convenient to River North (in the Embassy Suites hotel).... *Tel 312/642-8450. www.papagusgreektaverna.com. 620 N. State St., at Ontario St. Grand el stop (Red Line). Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–10pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–11pm; Sun 2:30–9:30pm. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Penang (p. 51) CHINATOWN *MALAYSIAN/JAPANESE* A combination Malaysian/Japanese restaurant located in the heart of Chinatown, this sprawling, boisterous place is filled with Asian patrons, as sure a sign of good food as a deli full of Jews or an Indian restaurant filled with nan-eating Indians. The mango shrimp looks a bit scary—bright orange food always seems slightly extraterrestrial, doesn't it?—but tastes great, while the tofu satay with peanut sauce is an unusual concoction that really works. Fish wrapped in banana leaves, Buddhist yam pot, and dishes starring animal parts not often consumed on the streets of Chicago round out the menu, which has more than 150 options.... *Tel 312/326-6888. 2201 S. Wentworth, at Cermak Rd. Cermak/Chinatown el stop (Red Line); take a cab at night. MC, V. Daily 11am–1am. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Penny's Noodle Shop (p. 53) LAKE VIEW *ASIAN* This bustling, bright restaurant serves up a steady stream of affordable noodle dishes to a loyal crowd of neighborhood regulars (nothing on the menu is more than $10). If you're dining solo, grab a seat at the semicircular counter and do some surreptitious people-watching. Penny's also has another location tucked beneath the el tracks near Wrigley Field (Tel 773/281-8222; 3400 N. Sheffield Ave.), but with only about 30 seats, there's usually quite a wait for a table.... *Tel 773/281-8448. 950 Diversey Pkwy., at Sheffield Ave. Diversey el stop (Brown Line). MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–10pm; Fri–Sat 11am–10:30pm. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

The Phoenix Restaurant (p. 53) CHINATOWN *CHINESE* Dim sum is the claim to fame here: Carts topped with every kind of dumpling imaginable make their way through throngs of hungry diners during weekend lunch (come during the week for a less hectic scene). Evenings, stop by the Phoenix Noodle and Dumpling House downstairs for late-night noshing.... *Tel 312/328-0848. 2131 S. Archer Ave., at Wentworth Ave. Cermak/Chinatown el stop (Red Line); take a cab at night. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Pizzeria Due (p. 48) MAGNIFICENT MILE *PIZZA* An old reliable in an old brownstone—thick deep-dish 'zas oozing cheese, sausage, and virtually every vegetable imaginable, just like you like 'em. Beware of the long waits during prime tourist season.... *Tel 312/943-2400. 619 N. Wabash St., between Ontario and Ohio sts. Grand el stop (Red Line). Reservations not accepted Fri–Sat. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–1am; Fri–Sat 11am–2am. $*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Pizzeria Uno (p. 48) MAGNIFICENT MILE *PIZZA* The same menu as Pizzeria Due (see above), but this original location is only half the size—which can mean even longer waits, though it is *the* original.... *Tel 312/321-1000. 29 E. Ohio St., between Wabash*

Ave. and State St. Grand el stop (Red Line). Reservations not accepted Fri–Sat. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–1am; Sat 11:30am–2am; Sun 11:30am–11:30pm. $

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Puck's at the MCA **(p. 51)** MAGNIFICENT MILE *AMERICAN* While the Museum of Contemporary Art may not wow you, this restaurant, located there and overlooking a sculpture garden and the lake beyond, surely will. (You can eat here without paying admission to the museum.) Puck, by the by, is internationally known chef Wolfgang Puck. The menu changes daily, but the contemporary food is consistently good, whether you're chowing down on ginger-crusted chicken satay, or various pizzas, salads, and sandwiches. This is an excellent lunch stop while shopping on Michigan Avenue or during a hard day of discussing the meaning of it all.... *Tel 312/397-4034. 200 E. Chicago Ave., at Fairbanks Court. Chicago el stop (Red Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 11:30am–2pm; Sun 11am–3pm. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

The Pump Room **(p. 48)** GOLD COAST *FRENCH/AMERICAN* This place is glitz galore in a chandeliered dining room with big booths and big-budget entrees (caviar, lobster, etc.) Its glory days as a celebrity hotspot are long gone, but this is the place Chicagoans come when they want to celebrate a big anniversary or other special occasion. There's also a neat little bar and jazz dancing on weekends.... *Tel 312/266-0360. www.pumproom.com. 1301 N. State St., at Goethe St. Clark/Division el stop (Red Line). Reservations and jackets required. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 7am–2pm and 6–10pm; Fri–Sat 7am–2pm and 6–10pm; Sun 11:30am–2pm and 6–10pm. $$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Reza's **(p. 54)** RIVER NORTH *MIDDLE EASTERN* Huge and boisterous, this Persian restaurant offers more than 100 choices on the menu, from lamb kabob to *kashkeh bodemjan* (eggplant, curds, and whey) to quail to grilled duck breast in pomegranate sauce. If you order kabobs, request the flavorful dill rice.... *Tel 312/664-4500. 432 W. Ontario St., between Orleans and Kingsbury sts. Grand el stop (Red Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. $$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.
See Map 6 on p. 64.
See Map 7 on p. 65.

Room 12 **(p. 60)** SOUTH LOOP *AMERICAN* The latest venture from the owners of the Bongo Room (p. 69), Room 12 features the same breakfast/lunch menu in a location that's more convenient for anyone staying downtown.... *Tel 312/427-9972. 1152 S. Wabash St., between 11th St. and Roosevelt Rd. Roosevelt el stop (Red Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 8am–2:30pm; Sat–Sun 9:30am–2:30pm. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Rosebud (p. 48) LITTLE ITALY *ITALIAN* Everything served in this rambling, bustling restaurant is big: heaping pastas, a garlicky chicken Vesuvio as big as Vesuvius itself. This is old-school Italian (i.e., heavy), but reliably tasty.... *Tel 312/942-1117. www.rosebudrestaurants.com. 1500 W. Taylor St., at S. Laflin St. Take a cab. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–10:30pm; Fri 11am–11:30pm; Sat 5–11:30pm; Sun 4–10pm. $$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Scoozi! (p. 51) RIVER NORTH *ITALIAN* This place is a feast for the eyes, with purposely decrepit walls, immense sprays of flowers, mirrors, and golden-glow lighting. The first "cool" Italian restaurant in town when it opened in the 1980s, it's still known for it's good thin-crust pizzas and homemade pastas.... *Tel 312/943-5900. 410 W. Huron St., between Sedgwick St. and Hudson Ave. Chicago el stop (Brown Line). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5:30–9pm; Fri 5:30–10pm; Sat 5–10pm; Sun 5–9pm. $$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Spiaggia (p. 48) MAGNIFICENT MILE *ITALIAN* Soaring ceilings, pastel colors, views of the lake, and loads of waitstaff scurrying around set the scene at this exquisite Italian restaurant. This is real gourmet dining, so don't come expecting spaghetti and meatballs (and guys, note that jackets are required).... *Tel 312/280-2750. www.levyrestaurants.com. 980 N. Michigan Ave., at Oak St. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Jackets required. Reservations strongly recommended on weekends. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 5:30–9:30pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–10pm. $$$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

SushiSamba Rio (p. 48) RIVER NORTH *SUSHI/LATIN AMERICAN* Designed by David Rockwell, this colorful, multi-level dining room is the current "it" scene for trendy young Chicagoans. The menu sounds like a gimmick (sushi mixed with Latin American food?), but the combination works. Great for groups—not only is it the kind of place where everyone's talking loudly, but the menu offers a wide variety to keep everyone happy. Feeling adventurous? Try the *sawagani,* the restaurant's most talked-about appetizer. These tiny river crabs are fried and eaten whole—shell and all.... *Tel 312/595-2300. www.sushisamba.com. 504 N. Wells St., at Illinois St. Grand el stop (Red Line) or Merchandise Mart (Brown Line). Reservations recommended. AE, MC, V. Sun–Tues 11:45am–11pm; Wed 11:45am–midnight; Thurs–Fri 11:45am–1am; Sat 11:45am–2am. $$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Sushi Wabi (p. 53) WEST LOOP *SUSHI* As spare and minimal as a well-cut slice of raw fish on a bed of rice, this hip sushi bar in the hip West Loop neighborhood serves what is perhaps the best sushi in town. In Japanese, by the way, *wabi* means "elegant simplicity," and the industrial wood-block-and-concrete tables and

the machine-shop stools only add to the cool feel. ***Warning:*** A DJ spins Tuesday through Saturday. Can you say EXCRUTIATINGLY LOUD?... *Tel 312/563-1224. www.sushiwabi.com. 842 W. Randolph St., at Green St. Bus 65 (Grand Ave.); take a cab at night. Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5pm–midnight; Sat 5pm–midnight; Sun 5–11pm. $$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Tizi Melloul **(p. 52)** RIVER NORTH *MOROCCAN* A Moroccan restaurant as seen through the eyes of some very creative art directors with a penchant for bright blues, oranges, reds, and yellows, this River North hot spot, on the edge of the gallery district, has been a huge hit with the young and PalmPiloted since the day it flung open its doors. While the interior may be one of the most magical in town, the food is down-to-earth, delicious, and interesting. For the full experience, try the prix-fixe meal (there are two different menus served in two different dining rooms) served in the Crescent Room ($30); highlights include the *tagines,* cooked in a conical-shaped vessel, featuring tuna, lamb, or vegetables.... *Tel 312/670-4338. www.tizimelloul.com. 531 N. Wells St., between Grand Ave. and Ohio St. Grand el stop (Red Line). Reservations recommended on weekends. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Wed 5:30–10pm; Thurs and Sun 5–10pm; Fri–Sat 5–11pm. $$$*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Toast **(p. 60)** LINCOLN PARK *AMERICAN* A family breakfast hangout, Toast attracts local parents and kids with creative twists on pancakes and egg dishes (try the "pancake orgy" of a strawberry, mango, and banana-pecan pancake topped with granola, yogurt, and honey). Expect a crowd on weekends.... *Tel 773/935-5600. 746 W. Webster St., between Burling and Halsted sts. Armitage el stop (Brown Line). Reservations not accepted. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 7am–3pm; Sat–Sun 8am–4pm. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Trattoria No. 10 **(p. 56)** THE LOOP *ITALIAN* If you're searching for a great Italian meal downtown, Trattoria No. 10 has a burnt-orange ambience straight out of Tuscany, and food—particularly the ravioli—to match.... *Tel 312/984-1718. 10 N. Dearborn St., between Washington and Madison sts. Washington el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). Reservations recommended. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–9pm; Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10pm; Sat 5:30–10pm. $$$*

See Map 7 on p. 65.

Tru **(p. 48)** MAGNIFICENT MILE *FRENCH/AMERICAN* One of the places that consistently shows up on critics' "Best Chicago Restaurants" lists, Tru mixes modern style with culinary substance. Chefs Rick Tramonto and Gale Gand combine expert

French technique with an American lack of pretentiousness. Take, for example, the Surf, Turf, and Turf (roasted lobster, sweetbreads, and foie gras) or the "soup and sandwich" dessert (hot chocolate soup with marshmallows, peanut butter, and banana bread pudding). Presentations are creative and often surprising. All the meals here are prix-fixe (from three to eight courses), and at least one of those courses is guaranteed to make you smile.... *Tel 312/202-0001. www.trurestaurant.com. 676 N. St. Clair St., between Huron and Erie sts. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Reservations required. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5:30–10pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm. $$$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 64.

Wiener Circle **(p. 55)** LINCOLN PARK *AMERICAN* Burgers are better than the dogs here, and the fries are some of the best in town. Customers hunker down at wooden picnic tables out front in the wake of carbon monoxide spewed from passing buses. The scene really livens up post-midnight, when the drunken hoards come swarming in.... *Tel 773/477-7444. 2622 N. Clark St., at Wrightwood Ave. Bus 22 (Clark St.). Reservations not accepted. No credit cards. Daily 11am–4am. $*

See Map 5 on p. 46.

Wishbone **(p. 51)** WEST LOOP *SOUTHERN* At this hip, casual restaurant, dig into Southern home-cooking, such as pan–fried chicken or the house specialty—hoppin' John (black-eyed peas over rice with cheddar, scallions, and tomatoes) and great pecan pie.... *Tel 312/850-2663. http://wishbone.epagecity.com. 1001 W. Washington St., at Morgan St. Bus 65 (Grand Ave.), or take a cab. Reservations not accepted for weekend brunch. Mon 7am–3pm; Tues–Fri 7am–3pm and 5–9pm; Sat 8am–3pm and 5–10pm; Sun 8am–3pm. $$*

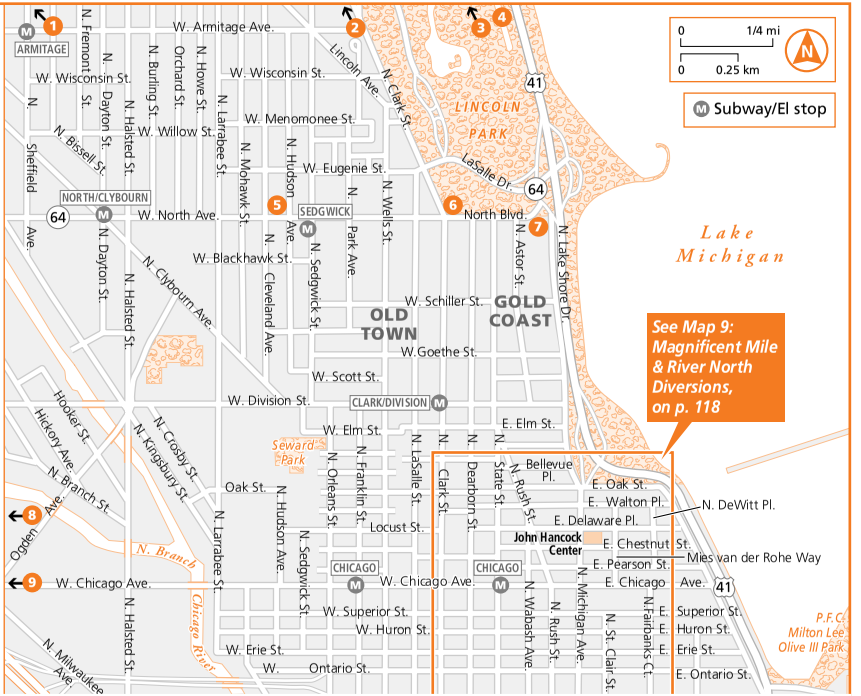
See Map 5 on p. 46.

DIVER

SIONS

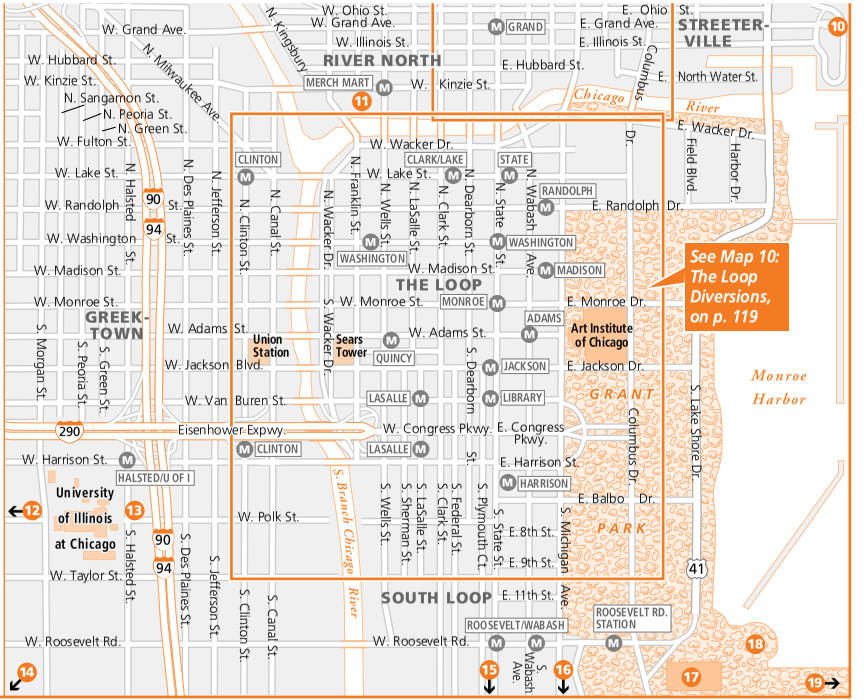
3

- Adler Planetarium **19**
- Brookfield Zoo **12**
- Chicago Children's Museum **10**
- Chicago Historical Society **6**
- Clarke House **16**
- Field Museum of Natural History **17**
- Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio **9**
- Glessner House **16**
- Hull House **13**
- Illinois Institute of Technology **15**
- International Museum of Surgical Science **7**
- Lincoln Park Zoo **4**
- Merchandise Mart **11**
- Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum **14**
- National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum **16**
- Northwestern University **1**
- Oak Park Visitors Center **9**
- Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum **3**
- Polish Museum of America **8**



Prairie Avenue Historic District **16**
St. Michael's **5**
Shedd Aquarium **18**
Southport Lanes **1**
Swedish-American Museum Center **2**
Unity Temple **9**

See Map 11: Hyde Park Diversions, on p. 120



Basic Stuff

Chicago has a way of derailing even the most sensible itineraries. Sure, you may think you're going to walk from your hotel to the Art Institute of Chicago, but then you find yourself passing through **Lincoln Park** and instead decide to sit in the shadow of the bronze statue of William Shakespeare and read a detective novel. Or you plan to lounge on **Oak Street Beach** and work on your tan but wind up renting rollerblades at the concession stand and hotdogging it up and down the boardwalk until the sun sinks beneath the horizon. Day after day your plans don't quite get fulfilled, and yet you've done so much.

It's not merely that Chicago is a big city—after all, Detroit is a big place, too—but it's a big city with an unusually wide array of things to do. It's not a sunny resort area where you either sit on the beach or windsurf, 'nuff said, or a cement canyon where you walk around museums and sample tony restaurants. It's both of those things: windsurfing at **Montrose Beach** in the morning and high tea at **The Ritz-Carlton** in the afternoon one day; the next, brunch at **Ann Sather's** and a stroll through the **DuSable Museum of African-American History**, with the afternoon spent learning to sail at **Belmont Harbor** and the evening at a first-rate play at the **Steppenwolf Theatre.** The only real challenge is apportioning your time so you don't feel cheated in the end.

Getting Your Bearings

Chicago, bless its heart, is one of the easiest big cities to navigate. The city is laid out like a grid, with the intersection of north–south **State Street** and east–west **Madison Street** in **The Loop** as the center. Addresses get incrementally bigger in all directions as you move away from this point, with about 100 numbers per block, 800 per mile. So, at the same place on each perpendicular street you'll more or less find the same address; 3000 N. Sheridan Rd., for instance, is as far north from Madison Street as that same address on every other north–south street. There are a few diagonal thoroughfares, such as **Lincoln** and **Ridge** avenues, but their number systems by and large are in keeping with the grid streets—2000 Clark St., for example, is at Armitage, the same way 2000 Lincoln Park West is. The lake is east—always. The most significant street to know is **Lake Shore Drive,** which hugs the coast north–south. The other main north–south drags include **Broadway, Clark Street, Halsted Street, Dearborn Parkway, LaSalle Street,** and

Michigan Avenue. Six of the Loop's east–west thoroughfares are named after presidents—**Washington, Madison, Monroe, Adams**, **Jackson,** and **Van Buren.** Farther north, **North Avenue, Fullerton, Diversey,** and **Belmont** are zeniths of neighborhood activity. Laid on top of this gridlike scenario are the el and bus routes, which traverse the city in such a way that a car, while helpful, is unnecessary. Getting from the Loop to Wrigley Field for a Cubs game is a one-train deal. You can take a bus from the Lincoln Park Zoo to Marshall Field's and, as you glide down Stockton Drive and then Michigan Avenue, you get a magnificent sightseeing tour thrown in for free. The **Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)** is one of the few remaining subway systems in the United States that operates most days around the clock (though some stations are closed after traditional work hours and on part or all of the weekends, so it's imperative to check). Generally, the entire system is referred to as the "el" because parts of it are elevated, like a roller coaster. At places it curves from side to side like a roller coaster, too. There are six separate subway routes, denoted in different colors on the maps, copies of which are available at every subway token booth. And then there are buses, which follow various routes illustrated on blue-and-white signs posted at the bus stops (generally every two blocks along the route). The fare on trains and buses is currently $1.75 (plus a 30¢ transfer for use between bus lines, which must be used within 2 hours of its issuance). For a map or free advice on how to get from one place to another, call the CTA (Tel 312/836-7000). Just remember, Chicago is flat, streets run for the most part straight north–south, east–west, and the lake is always, always, always east. Now go have fun.

The Lowdown

Must-sees... You should not leave the city limits without going to the **Art Institute of Chicago,** even if it's just to stand slack-jawed with the crowd that is usually massed before what may be the museum's most famous holding, Georges Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte.* The crowds are not here because of hype: It is actually an incredible painting, the only one I know of to have a Broadway musical based on it (Stephen Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George*). And no visit to Chicago would be complete without going to see Sue, the fossilized

bones of the single largest, most complete, and best preserved T. rex fossil yet discovered at the **Field Museum of Natural History.** There are touchable casts of selected bones that allow you to diagnose some of the wounds that have been found in her skeleton, animated CT images of her skull that take you on a virtual journey inside her head, and a time-lapse video showing the mounting of Sue's colossal skeleton. Odds are, once you get home, some neighborhood wisenheimer will ask if you walked through the giant heart at the **Museum of Science and Industry**—and in this case, the wisenheimer knows whereof he speaks. It may sound kitschy, but it's an oddly impressive experience, as is this whole huge hands-on museum where adults are just as enthralled as kids. Graceful, ornate **Buckingham Fountain,** along Lake Shore Drive in Grant Park, is another don't-miss-it, if for no other reason than because over the years it's become a city icon.

Special moments... You must, must, must take a long, lazy drive up (or down) **Lake Shore Drive.** The experience is what they call a two-fer: You see the lake on one side, and the **Loop** skyline, **Grant Park,** the **Gold Coast,** and **Lincoln Park** on the other. Day or night, it's a stunning vista. Walk around the **Loop**—better yet, take a guided tour given by the **Chicago Architecture Foundation**—to get a feel for the business that makes this powerful city really tick. As crowds of stockbrokers and lawyers scurry around you, stand still on a corner and crane your neck to study America's most perfect assemblage of classic skyscraper architecture. Speaking of walking, take a jaunt up (or down) North Michigan Avenue (see the Shopping chapter), the city's prime shopping thoroughfare, with huge stores and malls housing the city's most glamorous places to buy stuff. And if you're in town during baseball season, make time to attend a Cubs game at Wrigley Field (see the Entertainment chapter). The ballpark is in the middle of a tight residential neighborhood (parking stinks, so take public transportation if you can).

Only in Chicago... No matter how happy you are to be in Chicago, there's always room for the blues. Whether you visit **Buddy Guy's Legends** in the Loop or **Kingston Mines** on the North Side (see the Nightlife chapter), you won't

regret it. After all, Chicago is the home of the blues. You shouldn't miss **Robie House,** either, perhaps Frank Lloyd Wright's most famous residential building within the city limits (it's in Hyde Park); it may inspire you to trek on out to suburban **Oak Park** to see more of Wright's iconoclastic Prairie Style architecture, born and bred here in Chicago. Then go stuff your face with a world-famous deep-dish pizza from either **Pizzeria Uno** or **Due,** the city's premier pizza makers (see the Dining chapter). Other cities, from New York to London, may claim that they make authentic Chicago pizzas, but none—and I mean none—make them as good as pizza makers in Chicago. There is no room for argument here.

Get yer cheap art here!

Art should free your mind, not free your wallet of all its money. Time your visit right, and you can save cash on museum admissions. If you're here during non-tourist season (Sept–Feb), you can visit the Adler Planetarium, Shedd Aquarium, Field Museum of Natural History, and the Museum of Science and Industry for free on Mondays and Tuesdays. (Sorry, summer visitors: You'll pay full fare every day of the week.) The Art Institute of Chicago offers free admission on Tuesdays year-round; the Museum of Contemporary Art is free on Tuesdays from 5 to 8pm. If you plan on hitting lots of museums while you're here, you'll save a bundle with CityPass, which includes admission to all the big museums ($49 for adults, $39 children—a 50% discount off the museums' regular admission fees). Buy a pass at any museum when you get here, or order one online at www.citypass.net.

Prowling the Gold Coast...

According to a 1994 study by Roosevelt University, Chicago's Gold Coast is second only to Manhattan when it comes to the highest concentration of moola in the country. From the lake to roughly about LaSalle Street, Chicago to North avenues, this is Chicago's fancy-shmanciest area, incorporating exclusive shopping and tree-shaded residential streets lined with gorgeous town houses, pre-war apartment buildings, and some very ugly modern towers. Roaming around is a pleasure. The former Playboy Mansion (1340 N. State St., at Lake Shore Dr.) is now condos, but you can still try to imagine what Hef was up to in there for all those years. The Archbishop's Residence (1555 N. State Pkwy.) is a Queen Anne–style red-brick mansion,

Oprah in Person

Oprah Winfrey tapes her phenomenally successful talk show at Harpo Studios, 1058 W. Washington Blvd., just west of the Loop. If you'd like to be in her studio audience, you'll have to plan ahead: Reservations are taken by phone only (Tel 312/591-9222), at least one month in advance.

typical at least in size of the many ornate palaces built after the Chicago Fire that used to line Lake Shore Drive. Other architectural highlights include McKim, Mead & White's 1892 Patterson-McCormick Mansion (20 E. Burton Place), originally built for Joseph Medill, who was mayor of Chicago and part owner of the *Chicago Tribune;* the 1914 Three Arts Club (1300 N. Dearborn St.), designed by the architectural firm of Holabird & Roche; the Louis Sullivan Townhouses (1826–1834 N. Lincoln Park West), designed by Sullivan himself; and Charnley House (1365 N. Astor St.), designed by Adler & Sullivan. In fact, all of Astor Street, from Division Street to North Avenue, is a designated National Historical Landmark. Check out the **Chicago Historical Society,** at Clark Street and North Avenue. It's a really wonderful museum—not boring or staid like a lot of historical society digs. When walking around finally starts to get to you, head over to Oak Street Beach, where sunbathers, rollerbladers, walkers, runners, and saunterers provide a good dose of live theater. At the south end of North Avenue Beach (or, depending on where you are, the north end of Oak Street Beach), you can rest and play chess at the Chess Pavilion, where chess challengers from around the city gather to square off. Beneath a concrete sculpture that looks almost airborne, schmoozers and players alike sit around at all hours, some playing the game, some watching, some just contemplating the passing crowd. Bring your own chess pieces and you too can play on the built-in boards. It's almost always a wonderful Chicago scene. Along Oak Street itself is a prime shopping area, one block crammed with chi-chi boutiques set in exquisite brownstones (see the Shopping chapter for details).

Museumscapes... If you've only got the stamina to see one museum in the city, head for the **Art Institute of Chicago.** There's a velvet rope in front of Seurat's pointillist masterpiece, *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte,* perhaps the museum's most beloved picture. Everyone wants to get close to it, to be near it, to see it, to remember

it. Though the Art Institute's collection does not have the depth of some other, larger museums, its many famous holdings make it seem like Art History's Greatest Hits. The Impressionist collection is the museum's main claim to fame (and the section that draws the largest crowds), but you'll find plenty of famous names in the Modern & Contemporary Art wing (Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks* and Grand Wood's *American Gothic* often provoke double-takes from visitors). But tucked away throughout the Art Institute are less obvious treasures as well. Don't miss what's left of the Trading Room of the original Chicago Stock Exchange, the rest of which was demolished for stupid reasons in 1972 (to make way for a modern skyscraper); luckily, portions of the beautifully stenciled walls, molded pilaster capitals, and art glass were preserved and incorporated into the re-creation you'll see here. (The Exchange's two-story entry arch was also saved and re-erected in a nearby garden at the museum.) Also, check out the Rubloff paperweight collection. It sounds dumb—paperweights—but their magnificent sparkling colorings and

Museum Free Days

Plan your time in Chicago carefully and you can save yourself admission fees to some of the city's major museums. However, keep in mind that you will still have to pay for special exhibitions and films on free days.

Monday: *Adler Planetarium (Sept–Feb, except the last two weeks of Dec.), Field Museum of Natural History (Sept–Feb, except the last two weeks of Dec.), Museum of Science and Industry (Sept–Feb, except the last two weeks of Dec.), Shedd Aquarium (Sept–Feb, except the last two weeks of Dec., Oceanarium admission extra)*

Tuesday: *Adler Planetarium (Sept–Feb, except the last two weeks of Dec.), Art Institute of Chicago, Field Museum of Natural History (Sept–Feb, except the last two weeks of Dec.), International Museum of Surgical Science, Museum of Contemporary Art (5-8pm only), Museum of Science and Industry (Sept–Feb, except the last two weeks of Dec.), Shedd Aquarium (Sept–Feb, except the last two weeks of Dec., Oceanarium admission extra)*

Thursday: *Chicago Children's Museum (5–8pm only)*

Friday: *Spertus Museum*

Sunday: *DuSable Museum of African-American History*

Always Free: *Chicago Cultural Center, Garfield Park Conservatory, David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, Lincoln Park Conservatory, Lincoln Park Zoo, Martin D'Arcy Gallery of Art, Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Newberry Library*

designs make them as gorgeous as fine jewelry. Also, whether you're an interior-design junkie or not, the Miniature Thorne Rooms—68 tiny but scarily intricate re-creations of spectacular period interiors—is worth a visit to the museum alone. In its grand space just off Michigan Avenue, the **Museum of Contemporary Art** sits like an imposing fortress, with all the charm of Cold War-era East Berlin. But step inside and you'll find an airy, light-filled building, with plenty of space devoted to the museum's permanent collection (works by artists such as Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra, Jeff Koons, and Chicago master Ed Pashke). Though the building looks massive, you can easily catch all the highlights within an hour or two. (If you've got a taste for the avant-garde, the museum runs a busy schedule of edgy video- and computer-related works and performance art.) In Hyde Park, the **Smart Museum of Art** displays the University of Chicago's eclectic art collection—including paintings by Degas and Matisse, sculptures by Rodin and Henry Moore, and an outstanding Greek vase collection. The best thing here is the original dining room set designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for his now-famous **Robie House,** a few blocks away in Hyde Park.

Ethnic museums... Jewish art and artifacts, from ritual objects to paintings and sculpture, are on display at the **Spertus Museum of Judaica,** which is of limited interest except for the moving Zell Holocaust Memorial and the Children's Artifact Center, a clever hands-on exhibit that lets kids learn the history of the Middle East through archaeology. On the University of Chicago campus, the **Oriental Institute Museum** showcases the art and artifacts of the Near East—ancient Persia, Iraq, Egypt, Israel, Syria, and Turkey—from about 9000 B.C. to the tenth century A.D., with many pieces of art, archaeological finds, and other things pillaged from other cultures during a time when pillaging wasn't so un-PC. Highlights include Egyptian mummies and, from an Assyrian palace, a 40-ton sculpture of a winged bull. The **DuSable Museum of African American History,** also in Hyde Park, traces the black experience in America; displays honor Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Sojourner Truth, and others. For good luck, rub the nose of the bronze bust of Haitian-born Jean Baptiste-Pointe DuSable, a trader born of mixed

The City's Architecture

Chicagoans take their architecture very seriously. They argue about it on the el; they discuss it over breakfast reading the Tribune; they take special trips to the Loop to see the latest controversial building. And they have good reason for such passion: Chicago is a city of hundreds of architectural gems, a living, breathing hothouse of important buildings, controversial construction, and innovation.

Chicago is known as the birthplace of modern American architecture. Why? Well, after the Great 1871 Fire singed four densely built square miles of mostly wooden buildings, the 1869 stone Water Tower *on Michigan Avenue was one of the few buildings left standing (and it's not much to look at). So the city had to be rebuilt, coincidentally just as new technologies (like the elevator, steel skeletons, and fireproof terra-cotta cladding) were making it possible to build taller, more interesting buildings. The city's building boom attracted the country's greatest architects, from Louis Sullivan to Henry Hobson Richardson to Frank Lloyd Wright. (It's still home to great architects, such as Helmut Jahn, Stanley Tigerman, and Larry Booth.) The boom encouraged them and others to experiment with form and function—and did they ever.*

African and European blood; he was the first known non-Native American settler in Chicago. In Pilsen, the **Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum** showcases contemporary Mexican and Mexican-American art with new exhibits every couple of months, while on the Northwest Side the **Polish Museum of America** highlights both traditional and modern Polish and Polish-American art, including the Stations of the Cross from the first Polish church in America. It's one of the largest museums in the country devoted to the art and history of one ethnic group, but given that there are more Poles in Chicago than in any other city in the world other than Warsaw, that shouldn't come as too big a surprise.

The wonders of science... As it happens, Chicago has a whole raft of museums devoted to the sciences, strung out along the shore of Lake Michigan. The starting point has to be down in Hyde Park at the truly great **Museum of Science and Industry.** One of its most beloved exhibits is also one of the simplest: Stand in one spot in the oval-shaped Whispering Gallery and you can murmur to a person standing all the way on the other side—that person'll hear you loud and clear. It's an ever-amazing thing to do, and more so because while doing it you realize you've also

learned how sound travels. It's like that all over the museum, where visitors learn almost by osmosis as they walk through, pull, touch, explore, and wonder at the more than 2,000 interactive exhibits, including an actual Boeing 727's fuselage, an authentic U-505 Nazi submarine, and a reproduction of a Southern Illinois coal mine. Go north up the lakeshore to Grant Park, and you'll find another of the big kahunas of Chicago's museum world, the **Field Museum of Natural History,** with its mighty dinosaurs (especially Sue, the largest T. rex fossil ever found), hairy beasts, and permanent and temporary exhibits devoted to all things natural, from anthropology to zoology. Enormous exhibits, such as "Africa," "Oceana," or "Inside Ancient Egypt"—which includes the *masaba* (tomb) of Pharaoh Unis and 23 actual mummies—feature interactive experiences that allow visitors not only to see how other cultures and environments exist, but to feel a visceral connection to them. Across the road from the Field is the **Shedd Aquarium,** a splendid facility that's practically as good as an indoor Sea World. Once you've checked out the water, look up to see the sky at the **Adler Planetarium** with its high-tech, special effects–laden 68-foot-high Sky Theater. If you can, go on the first Friday night of the month—after this show, the Adler uses its incredible 20-inch computerized telescope to instantly project 18-foot by 24-foot live images of outer space to the audience. A bit farther north, in Lincoln Park, the **Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum** is home to an enchanting 28-foot-high butterfly greenhouse housing more than 500 fluttering wonders representing a dozen species; a wilderness walk; and even something non-nature types can relate to: an actual 3,000-square-foot, two-story house whose infrastructure has been peeled away to meet the creatures that inhabit every city home. You'll come to understand—for better or for worse—how every time you flip a switch or turn up the heat in your house, you're tapping into processes being conducted hundreds or even thousands of miles away. (And you thought nature museums only exhibited ant farms and baby chicks!) For those bored by the usual museum displays, head to the oddly fascinating **International Museum of Surgical Science,** housed in a couple of great 1917 former residences on Lake Shore Drive, for a tour of medical devices through the ages, as

well as a re-creation of a turn-of-the-century drug store (it's not exactly Walgreens).

Talk is cheap... Since Michael Jordan skipped town, our biggest local celebrity is probably **Oprah Winfrey,** who tapes her talk show in a warehouse-size studio just west of the Loop. If you'd like to sit in the audience for a taping, be patient. Tickets are only available by phone (Tel 312/591-9222), and the phone lines seem to be permanently busy. It pays to start calling a month or more before your visit (and you won't be able to go during the summer, because Oprah's on vacation). If you like your talk shows a little more interactive, you can always head for the ***Jerry Springer*** show (Tel 312/321-5365 or 800/96-JERRY). ***Be warned:*** If you think the guests on the show are scary, you should see some members of the audience.

Kid-pleasers... ***Be prepared:*** The museums that are particularly kid-friendly, such as the **Field Museum of Natural History,** the **Shedd Aquarium,** and the **Museum of Science and Industry** (see "Must-sees" and "The wonders of science," above), can be filled with hoards of local kids during the school year (on field trips) and tourist kids in the summer. Still, these are not to be missed, even if your kids are only toddlers. The **Spertus Museum of Judaica** has a children's museum and a hands-on archaeology exhibit, which older kids can enjoy. Of the city's two zoos (see "Cruising the zoos," below), the smaller **Lincoln Park Zoo** is better for the under-eights, while older kids will probably prefer the more spread-out **Brookfield Zoo.** A **boat tour** on the lake (see "Tour time," below, or the Getting Outside chapter) makes sightseeing pretty palatable for children, and, of course, no thrill-seeking youngster would want to miss the zooming elevator ride to the way-high observatories at the **Sears Tower Skydeck** or the **John Hancock Center Observation Deck.** And now, something *especially* for kids: the **Chicago Children's Museum.** Here they can host a TV show or report the weather (Chicagoans are obsessed with weather, and besides Oprah and Sammy Sosa, our weather reporters are some of our biggest celebrities), wander a kid-size city complete with car wash, bakery, and gas station, or travel to the Sahara Desert—and 100 million years back in time—to dig for

dinosaur fossils. There's a constantly changing parade of temporary exhibits, and the museum itself is on Navy Pier, one of the most kid-friendly spots on earth (there's even a McDonald's).

Art al fresco... In front of Chicago's big skyscrapers, there are a lot of big sculptures. These are the highlights of the Loop, where approximately 65 pieces are within easy walking distance of one another. The most famous, and probably the only one you should go out of your way to see, is the great, untitled 1967 Picasso sculpture at **Daley Plaza** (Dearborn and Randolph sts.). It's become a virtual icon of the city, as much so as the Hancock building or Wrigley Field. There's a miniature version there, too, for the visually impaired and/or touchy-feely. *Flamingo,* Alexander Calder's bright red, spidery-looking 1974 stabile, soars 53 feet into the air in the shadow of the sullen-looking **Federal Center** (219 S. Dearborn St.). Touted as vandal-proof, it does look like it's still in perfect condition, so the boast must be true. *Les Quatre Saisons* is a fancy way of referring to Marc Chagall's 1967 Four Seasons at **Bank One Plaza** (Dearborn and Monroe sts.); an extraordinary piece, it's a 70-foot-long, 14-foot-high, four-sided colorful mosaic. Jean Dubuffet's *Monument with Standing Beast* at the **State of Illinois Building** (100 W. Randolph St.) is an exuberant 10-ton, black-and-white fiberglass gift from the artist himself. At more than 100 feet high, they say it's a bat, but Claes Oldenberg's 1977 *Batcolumn* at the **Social Security Administration Building** (600 W. Madison St.) just looks like a big phallic symbol to many. Check out Louise Nevelson's 1983 *Dawn Shadow* from the street at **Madison Plaza** (Madison and Wells sts.) if you must, but the view from the nearby el platform is better. The last of the best is Joan Miro's 1981 *Chicago* near the **Chicago Temple** (69 W. Washington St.), a bronze, concrete, and ceramic structure that mostly resembles a totem pole gone haywire.

Cruising the zoos... Chicago is lucky to have two world-class zoos. Even for those who find zoos slightly depressing—after all, would most of these animals really choose to be in Chicago if they had their druthers?—both the **Lincoln Park Zoo** and the **Brookfield Zoo** can be terrifically fun. The Brookfield, spread out over 200 acres, 14

miles due west of the Loop, is by far the bigger of the two. Its 2,000 animals (representing 425 species) are housed in more naturalistic settings than most of those in the Lincoln Park Zoo: Tropic World, for instance, is a football field–size indoor rainforest, complete with three different ecosystems, one each for South America, Asia, and Africa. If a schlep to the suburbs is not in the offing, you couldn't really do any better than a visit to the Lincoln Park Zoo, the most visited zoo in the entire country. Unlike most other zoos, this one doesn't charge admission, and it's a neighborhood zoo, where kids show up after school and families and couples stroll around on weekends and evenings just enjoying the urban scene. Set on 35 acres in the middle of Lincoln Park, it's an obvious choice for quick or long visits. Also, happily, in recent years, the zoo has been upgraded, so the animals are now housed in better-lit, better-ventilated, more naturalistic habitats. Considering its rather petite size, the zoo has a lot to offer, including the Farm-in-the-Zoo and a small children's zoo, inhabited mainly by babies of all manner of species; a trainer is often on hand to let kids pet one critter or another.

Strolling around Old Town... Old Town, the area roughly from Division Street north to Wisconsin Street, and LaSalle Street west to Larrabee Street, used to be funky; now it's rehabbed and refurbished. Its narrow side streets are jammed with both huge new-money houses and tiny renovated jobs (there's hardly anything rundown anymore). Check out Crilly Court (covering about five blocks east of Eugenie Street, bounded by Eugenie, West St., Paul St., N. Wells St., and N. Park Ave.), built in the 1880s by Daniel Crilly, a local developer, and rehabilitated in the 1940s, which touched off Old Town's renaissance. It's lined with town houses and apartment buildings that have magnificent gardens behind them, though you can't see them unless you know someone. You can, however, look above some of the apartment buildings' doors to find the names of Crilly's children carved there—Edgar, Oliver, Isabelle, and Erminie. Other beautiful buildings in this neighborhood worth a look-see include the Romanesque-style **St. Michael's** church, part of which actually lived through the 1871 fire. Legend has it that its church bells define the area because, supposedly, you're only really in Old Town if you

can hear them. (What that means for the whereabouts of the hearing-impaired is unclear.) On Wells Street, which was to Chicago in the 1960s what Haight-Ashbury was to San Francisco, a few small, funky boutiques remain, but mostly it's mid-priced restaurants and a couple of nice clothing stores. And something has to be said here about **Second City** (Tel 312/337-3992; 1616 N. Wells St.; see the Entertainment chapter), the world-famous improvisational comedy club that has spawned such hilarious luminaries as Elaine May, John Belushi, John Candy, Mike Myers, and Tina Fey. Mainly tourists go there, and while they usually have a laugh-riot, it's not as funny as it used to be, and it can be expensive. A less expensive alternative is to go after the main show for improv only.

Insider Tips for Touring the Art Institute

If you want to enjoy your favorite masterpieces in something resembling peace and quiet, put some thought into the timing of your visit to the Art Institute, a museum so popular that it draws as much traffic as our jammed expressways.

Some tips for avoiding the rush hour: Many people don't realize the museum is open on Mondays; so keep this secret to yourself, and visit when the galleries are relatively subdued. Wednesdays are a close second. Tuesdays tend to draw the masses because the Art Institute is free that day and open late (until 8pm). Try to arrive when the doors open in the morning or else during the lunchtime lull. Another tip: If the Michigan Avenue entrance is crowded, head around to the entrance on the Columbus Drive side, which is usually less congested and is more convenient to the Grant Park underground parking garage. There's a small gift shop near the Columbus Drive entrance, too, if the main shop is too bustling.

Gallery hopping... Gallery-hopping is a major Chicago pastime, with dozens of galleries from which to choose. Chicago's art scene is devoted mostly to contemporary art, and unlike galleries in some, ahem, eastern cities, Chicago gallery owners actually welcome browsers. New places open (and close) constantly; pick up a copy of the *Chicago Reader,* Chicago's free weekly, or the quarterly *Chicago Gallery News* at almost any gallery, for the latest listing of exhibits. Most galleries are open Tuesday through Saturday, 10am to 5pm, with shorter summer hours—call ahead if there's one show you want to make sure you see. The Michigan Avenue area, where the gallery scene began several years ago, is mostly

for big-time, big-name collecting. Expect to see works by artists such as Goya, Picasso, and Cassatt, among others, at leading galleries such as R.S. Johnson (Tel 312/943-1661; 645 N. Michigan Ave.) and Richard Gray (Tel 312/642-8877; 875 N. Michigan Ave.). Further west in River North, what were upstart galleries a generation ago are now mainstream, dealing mostly in contemporary American and European art. Literally dozens of galleries within a six-block area sell everything from fine photography at Catherine Edelman (Tel 312/266-2350; 300 W. Superior St.), Latin American art at Aldo Castillo (Tel 312/337-2536; 233 W. Huron St.), conceptual art at Roy Boyd (Tel 312/642-1606; 739 N. Wells St.), self-taught artists at the Carl Hammer Gallery (Tel 312/266-8512; 740 N. Wells St.), and most everything in between (even art from the Arctic) at Orca Art Gallery (Tel 312/280-4975; 812 N. Franklin St.). As rents rose in River North, smaller, edgier galleries began to sprout even further west—in an industrial area now dubbed River West, and in the Bucktown/Wicker Park neighborhoods. Both now teem with galleries, restaurants, and, more recently, residential loft conversions, a sure sign of art-world cachet. Intuit Gallery (Tel 312/243-9088; 756 N. Milwaukee Ave.) showcases outsider art, while Wood Street Gallery (Tel 773/227-3306; 1239 N. Wood St.), exhibits sculpture and paintings from emerging artists (the outdoor sculpture garden is worth a stop). Both Klein Art Works (Tel 312/243-0400; 400 N. Morgan St.) and Rhona Hoffman (Tel 312/455-1990; 118 N. Peoria St.) are respected River North transplants selling often-large contemporary American works.

T.G.I.F. in River North... Unlike New York (where many art gallery openings are exclusive, invitation-only affairs), galleries in Chicago's gallery districts hold their openings just about every Friday evening and are open to anyone who happens to cruise by. In River North particularly, where dozens of galleries are concentrated in a six-block area, an entire evening can be spent meandering around, sipping free wine from small plastic cups (even getting some chocolate-covered raisins from the Carl Hammer Gallery), and checking out the art and your fellow art lovers. Recently several galleries have instituted what they

call First Fridays, in which they stay open till eight-ish the first Friday of every month, whether there's an official opening or not.

Mayhem on the trading floors... Millions of dollars, tons of pork bellies, and tankers full of oil exchange hands every day in Chicago's money pits, the birthplace of modern commodity trading. You'd be amazed at the feral behavior of the traders as they scream, bellow, make what look to be obscene gestures, and just generally behave poorly at the **Chicago Board of Trade.** You used to be able to view the madness firsthand from the visitor's gallery, but after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the building was closed to the public. If you're really keen on checking it out, though, you can arrange a private tour upon request. Either way, check out the roof sculpture of Ceres (the Roman goddess of grain) at the Board of Trade, where wheat commodities are traded.

One good read deserves another... Sometimes you just want to be alone, to sit, and to read a good book. So head for the **Harold Washington Library Center**—a wonderful civic monument, opened in 1991 after years of political infighting (the usual Chicago thing). The building itself is far from welcoming (since it was inspired by Italian Renaissance palaces that doubled as forts), but the Winter Garden on the 9th floor is a lovely, sun-drenched spot for quiet contemplation. In good weather (always iffy in Chicago), another good place to lounge and read, just off the Magnificent Mile, is Washington Square (Walton St. at Dearborn), a patch of green unofficially known as "Bughouse Square." Chicago's first public park, it earned that nickname in the 1920s, when people would gather to hear radicals scream and yell about the ills of the world, a nutty open-air forum much like London's Speaker's Corner. Washington Square is across from the magnificent **Newberry Library,** a private research library specializing in Western civilization and the humanities; though you have to get permission to read here, check to see if any special events, for adults or kids, are on tap that day. Or, with book in hand, head up to **Lincoln Park** (see the Getting Outside chapter for more information)—either to the formal gardens in front of the Lincoln Park Conservatory or to lounge in the shadow of the fake totem pole at Addison

Street, a replica of the original that stood here until some carvers noted its historical significance to the Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia and had it shipped off to a Canadian museum. Other good outdoor reading spots are the concrete boardwalk and lawn along the lake, just south of Diversey Parkway; almost any bench on the **University of Chicago** campus; or the Gold Coast's Goudy Square Park (Astor and Goethe sts.), if you don't mind the sound of neighborhood rich kids playing in the background.

Cool views... Most people think the best view is the one from which they get the most extensive panorama, where they can gawk at the most square mileage—"Look, it's Indiana! How scenic!" But the truly breathtaking views, the ones that still make Chicagoans catch their breaths, are actually lower to the ground, if not on it, and sometimes from a moving vantage point. For instance, drive (or take a cab) north along Lake Shore Drive from Congress Parkway. On your left you'll see the city skyline at its most gorgeous advantage; on your right, the lake will spread out like an ocean. As you round the bend at Oak Street Beach (see the Getting Outside chapter for more information), majestic residential buildings begin to line the drive. Another possibility is to get on the el almost anywhere in the Loop—the views from either side as you circle the neighborhood bring you face to face with some of the city's best architecture, from the Monadnock Building to the **Harold Washington Library Center.** Other low-to-the-ground great views include standing on the Michigan Avenue Bridge, which crosses the Chicago River and neatly divides the city. It's a picture-postcard-perfect view of downtown, looking towards the south; of the Magnificent Mile to your north; and of the river both east and west. Picnic at the tip of Belmont Harbor, where the view of downtown and the lake is one of the best; or stand in front of **Buckingham Fountain,** with your back to the lake—before you, the downtown skyline looms like a Hollywood movie set, so gorgeous it almost looks fake. You can see much more than the stars and skies from the **Adler Planetarium** if you know where to look, such as north across Monroe Harbor from Solidarity Drive. In addition to the harbor itself, which in summer is jammed with sailboats and yachts, in the distance you'll get a spectacularly panoramic view of Navy Pier, Lake Point Towers, and

Photo Op

For a great photo op, walk on Randolph Street toward the lake in the morning. That's when the sun, rising in the east over the lake, hits the cliff of buildings along South Michigan Avenue—giving you the perfect backdrop for an only-in-Chicago picture.

the Michigan Avenue skyline. Another great but little-known view spot is from the fourth-floor balcony at Crate & Barrel overlooking Michigan Avenue (see the Shopping chapter), where you'll see the Magnificent Mile in all its glory from a unique angle.

Tried-and-true views... If you must see the city from the sky, there's nothing like the view from either the **Sears Tower Skydeck** on the 103rd floor of the 110-story building—at 1,450 feet, one of the world's tallest—or from the 94th-floor **John Hancock Center Observation Deck.** Nonstop, ear-popping express elevators zoom you to both observation decks in less than a minute, and what awaits is a breathtaking 360-degree panorama. On a clear day they say you can see up to 60 miles and four states. From the Sears Tower you'll get a better sense of downtown Chicago; from the Hancock, fondly known to locals as "Big John," you'll see the entire lake and the north side, on up all the way to Wisconsin.

Architectural masterpieces... The American Institute of Architecture publishes the *AIA Guide to Chicago,* a detailed guidebook to the city's scores of important buildings; the following (all open to the public) are just the top stars. The Rookery Building (209 S. LaSalle St.), designed by the firm of Burnham and Root in 1886, is a monumental office tower of scarlet stone in the south Loop; its lobby, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1905, was restored in 1991 to its 1910 appearance. The north half of the Monadnock Building around the corner (53 W. Jackson Blvd.) was designed in 1891 by Burnham and Root as well, while the south half is the work of the firm of Holabird and Roche. It's literally a transitional building: Burnham and Root's half has the distinction of being the tallest masonry building in the city, with 6-foot-thick walls at its base (to hold the whole thing up), while the other half, built 2 years later, is of steel-frame construction. A

few blocks north, large expanses of glass lend Daniel Burnham's 1890 Reliance Building (32 N. State St.) an elegant profile, which is today mainly significant as a fine example of just how far early architects were able to go in creating glass walls. After a painstaking rehab, the building is now home to the Hotel Burnham (see the Accommodations chapter) and Atwood Café (see the Dining chapter).

Master Builders: Sullivan, Wright & Mies

Visitors from around the world flock to Chicago to see the groundbreaking work of three major architects: Sullivan, Wright, and Mies. They all lived and worked in the Windy City, leaving behind a legacy of innovative structures that still inspire architects today. Here's the rundown on each of them:

Louis Sullivan (1865–1924)

- ***Quote:*** *"Form ever follows function."*
- ***Chicago buildings:*** *Auditorium Building, 430 S. Michigan Ave. (Adler & Sullivan, 1887–89); James Charnley House, 1365 Astor St. (Adler & Sullivan, with Frank Lloyd Wright, 1892); and Carson Pirie Scott & Co., 1 S. State St. (1899, 1903, with later additions).*
- ***Innovations:*** *Father of the Chicago school, Sullivan was perhaps at his most original in the creation of his intricate, nature-inspired ornamentation, examples of which cover the entrance to Carson Pirie Scott & Co.*

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959)

- ***Quote:*** *"Nature is my manifestation of God."*
- ***Chicago buildings:*** *Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio, 951 Chicago Ave., Oak Park (1889–1911); Unity Temple, 875 Lake St., Oak Park (1905–08); The Rookery, 209 S. LaSalle St. (interior renovation, 1907); and Frederick C. Robie House, 5757 S. Woodlawn Ave., Hyde Park (1909).*
- ***Innovations:*** *While in Chicago, Wright developed the architecture of the Prairie School, a largely residential style combining natural materials, an intercommunication between interior and exterior spaces, and the sweeping horizontals of the Midwestern landscape.*

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969)

- ***Quote:*** *"Less is more."*
- ***Chicago buildings:*** *860–880 N. Lake Shore Dr. (1949–51); S.R. Crown Hall, 3360 S. State St. (1956); and Chicago Federal Center, Dearborn St. between Adams St. and Jackson Blvd. (1959–74).*
- ***Innovations:*** *Mies van der Rohe brought the office tower of steel and glass to the United States. His stark facades don't immediately reveal his careful attention to details and materials.*

Six buildings that scream "Chicago"... The fact that the yellow stone **Water Tower** (800 N. Michigan Ave.) is still standing at all lends it a modicum of significance—it's just so old and, like Chicago itself, a survivor. It doesn't hurt, either, that it's the focal point of the city's most traveled street, or that Oscar Wilde notoriously labeled it a "monstrosity" during his 1882 visit to Chicago. For all its fame, it's really just a cover for a 38-foot-high standpipe. Ungainly and sinister-looking and just a block north, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's 1970 John Hancock Center (875 N. Michigan Ave.) sticks out like a sore thumb on the city's skyline, but it's one of its best-known buildings. You couldn't miss it if you tried. A few blocks south, the white terra-cotta-clad Wrigley Building (400 N. Michigan Ave.) is an ode to the chewing-gum empire of the building's namesake. Lit at night like a birthday cake (which many say it resembles), the building sits at the foot of the Magnificent Mile. Known as the "corncob buildings," the 62-story Marina City (300 N. State St.), built by Bertrand Goldberg in the early 1960s and just west of the Wrigley Building, is perhaps Chicago's best-known silhouette. That galls some people, since the two round buildings (filled with pie-shaped apartments) aren't very architecturally significant, and worse, they're not in such pristine shape, inside or out. Still, it's their exterior shape, which most people only see from afar, that locals love. Originally built in 1931 by Marshall Field, the elephantine **Merchandise Mart** is still, at 4 million square feet, one of the world's largest wholesale markets, its enormous floors lined with furniture, knickknacks, and fabric showrooms open to the trade only (the first two floors are a bland retail). It sits along the Chicago River west of Marina City, dominating the neighborhood like a Buddha. Wrigley Field (Clark and Addison sts.) may not be the most up-to-date ball park in the nation—it was built in 1914—but like the Chicago Cubs, it's much beloved. Its grass field and residential neighborhood location are almost unique in professional baseball nowadays.

Architecturally significant *and* they scream "Chicago"... While Carson Pirie Scott & Co. (1 S. State St.) may be merely a place in the Loop to buy socks and underwear to some, to others it is Louis Sullivan's masterpiece. Built between 1899 and 1904, the steel-frame

building was originally the Schlesinger & Meyer Company Store. But its retailing history takes second place to its architectural importance, which lies in its extraordinary use of ornamentation on the ground floor—especially the world-famous front door—topped by floor after floor of sleek terra-cotta-clad walls punctuated by what was known as the "Chicago window," a central window with smaller, movable windows on either side. The 1922 Gothic-style Tribune Tower (435 N. Michigan Ave.), across the street from the Wrigley Building at the foot of the Magnificent Mile, was built after a well-publicized contest in which the newspaper's owner, the powerful Colonel Robert McCormick, rejected more modern designs. Look for chunks of great buildings through the ages, such as Westminster Abbey, St. Peter's Basilica, and even the Berlin Wall, embedded into the tower's base. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who fled Nazi Germany and settled in Chicago, much to the city's great advantage, designed many important buildings—as well as most of the **Illinois Institute of Technology** on the South Side—but none as important, perhaps, as the two glass-and-steel apartment houses at 860–880 N. Lake Shore Dr., which he designed in 1952. Their distinctive boxlike profile became the basis for hundreds of other high-rise buildings around the city and the world.

The Wright stuff... Chicago is a Frank Lloyd Wright-o-phile's dream. Not only did he live and work in suburban Oak Park, which has a superb collection of his homes, but his work survives throughout the city of Chicago as well. He built the **Robie House** (and designed all its interior furnishings), now a National Historic Landmark, in 1909 near the University of Chicago campus. Lined with leaded-glass windows and topped with a low-slung cantilevered roof, the house exemplifies his uncluttered Prairie Style, which rejected Victorian-era ornamentation in favor of a look that was clean-lined, functional, and in harmony with its natural surroundings. Also in Hyde Park, other Wright houses include Blossom House (4858 S. Kenwood Ave.) and MacArthur House (4852 S. Kenwood Ave.), both built in 1892 when Wright was only 25 years old and an employee of Louis Sullivan, and Heller House (5132 S. Woodlawn Ave.), which dates to 1897. All are privately owned, but at least you can walk by and gawk. Wright

designed more than 30 buildings between 1899 and 1913 in nearby River Forest and Oak Park, suburbs 10 miles due west of the Loop. The **Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio** (951 Chicago Ave., Oak Park), where he lived and worked from 1889 to 1911, is open daily for tours. The **Unity Temple** (875 Lake St., Oak Park) was built from 1905 to 1908 and, like many of his buildings scattered throughout the Chicago area, is a National Historic Landmark. Both the **Oak Park Visitors Center** and the **Chicago Architecture Foundation** offer guided tours of Wright's Oak Park work (see "Tour time," later in this chapter).

Home sweet historic home... The **Prairie Avenue Historic District** (South Prairie Ave. between 18th and 20th sts.) was a once-fashionable neighborhood known as "Millionaire's Row," lined with many fine homes built from the 1870s to the 1890s by the city's wealthiest families, from George Pullman to Marshall Field. Unfortunately, most of them were torn down years ago; the few that remain are being, or have been, restored, along with the street itself, which is cobblestone and lit by gaslights just as it was in the 19th century. There are two star attractions here. **Clarke House,** built in 1836, is Chicago's oldest still-standing building. While the wooden structure is original, the location isn't—in fact, it's been moved twice, once after the 1871 fire, which it miraculously survived. Today it's a museum, still boasting some of its original furniture. The only surviving house by the great Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson—built in 1886 for John J. Glessner, founder of International Harvester—is today known as **Glessner House.** With a large interior courtyard, the 35-room house's exterior seems to turn away from the street, punctuated by small windows. On the unbelievably ugly University of Illinois campus, **Hull House** is where Benny Goodman learned to play the clarinet. It's even better known as the building where social worker Jane Addams performed her good works. If you find yourself in the Bridgeport neighborhood, drive or walk by the bungalow at 3536 S. Lowe Ave., former home of the pasha of Chicago politics, the late Richard J. Daley, who also happens to be the father of the city's current mayor.

Blasts from the past... On the streets nearest the lake on the North Side, once lined with beautiful houses and today mostly with apartment houses and condos, Hutchinson Street (four blocks north of Irving Park Rd.) stands out as a real prize. Most of the houses on Hutchinson between Clarendon Avenue and Lake Shore Drive were designed and built from 1894 to 1913 by architect George W. Maher and reflect the changing tastes of the time. Nearby Hawthorne Street (four blocks north of Belmont Ave.) is another street well worth strolling down, with most of its mansions originally built between 1880 and the 1930s. A few blocks away, Alta Vista Terrace (between Byron and Grace sts., two blocks west of Sheridan Rd.), built between 1900 and 1904, is known as the "Street of 40 Doors"; it's lined with 40 tiny but beautiful row houses with facades representing various eras—Gothic, Georgian, Palladian, each house facing its twin across the street. It's beautiful and sort of weird.

Lincoln Parking... The residential neighborhood of Lincoln Park is named after—you guessed it—Lincoln Park. The vast park itself remains its heart, with its zoo, conservatory, and loads of sports facilities (see the Getting Outside chapter). Just because you've finished hiking the park, though, doesn't mean you've "done" Lincoln Park. Them thar streets are paved with gold, or at least with houses lived in by people who make a lot of it, and almost every house is a delight. There's no dominant architectural style; row houses or single-family dwellings, built of brick, clapboard, or stone, are invariably well-tended, with gardens often in the front and back. Most are old and rehabbed, but the few brand-new houses tend to be showy. Just walk around, point at the ones you like best, and imagine how if you had the cash you'd buy this one or that. And then go shopping. There are stores galore along the neighborhood's streets—not just the regulars like Gap and Banana Republic, but scores of unique shops as well—such as 2nd Hand Tunes, which sells used albums (yes, vinyl LPs) and CDs, and Blake, a drop-dead chic women's boutique that should probably be on Oak Street (see the Shopping chapter for more on these stores).

Sky Train: Chicago's El

Watch any Hollywood film or TV series set in Chicago, and chances are they'll feature at least one scene set against our screeching elevated train system, more commonly known as the ***"El"*** *(witness* The Fugitive, ER, *and others). The trains symbolize Chicago's gritty, "city-that-works" attitude, but they actually began as a cutting-edge technology.*

After the Great Fire of 1871, Chicago made a remarkable recovery; within 20 years, the downtown district was swarming with people, streetcars, and horses (but no stoplights). To help relieve congestion, the city took to the sky, building a system of elevated trains 15 feet above all the madness. The first El trains were steam-powered, but by the end of the century all the lines—run by separate companies—used electricity. In 1895, the three El companies collaborated to build a set of tracks into and around the central business district that all the lines would then share. By 1897, the "Loop" was up and running.

Chicago's El wasn't the nation's first. That honor belongs to New York City, which started running its elevated trains in 1867, 25 years before Chicago. But the New York El has almost disappeared, moving underground and turning into a subway early last century. With 289 miles of track, Chicago has the biggest El in the country, and the second-largest public transportation system.

It's a small world... Walk around Andersonville and you'll see remnants of what is still thought of as the city's Swedish neighborhood, from the **Swedish-American Museum Center** (p. 128) to the food stores and bakeries (my favorites include Swedish Bakery and Wilkstrom's Gourmet Foods along the 5200 block of North Clark Street. But finding an actual Swede is not so easy. Today the neighborhood's ethnic mix includes Vietnamese, Thais, and Arabs, as well as a growing gay population. Rogers Park, the old Jewish neighborhood around Devon Avenue (6400 north), while maintaining some of its delis, bakeries, and butchers with window signs in Hebrew, has in the past decade become very international, with immigrants from India, Russia, and elsewhere living in what appears to be relative harmony. Here you'll find some of the city's best Indian restaurants, sari shops, and video stores renting and selling the best and the worst the Indian film industry has to offer. A few Korean restaurants and Russian groceries dot the street as well. The Southwest Side around Marquette Park (along Kedzie Ave. between 67th and 71st sts.) is home to many Lithuanians. Vietnamese immigrants have settled in what has recently been dubbed Little Saigon around

Argyle Street and Broadway, which houses restaurants, shops, and grocery stores, which stock a mind-boggling selection of Asian specialty foods. Though Poles have spread throughout the city, Polish businesses, restaurants, and nightclubs still line the area around Milwaukee Avenue from Division Street to Irving Park Road. Highlights include the **Polish Museum of America** and the renowned Czerwone Jabuszko (Red Apple) Restaurant (Tel 773/588-5781; 3121 N. Milwaukee Ave.), which serves hearty and bargain-priced Polish fare, including pirogi, stuffed cabbage, and *kure* (roasted chicken). Bridgeport, known the world over as the home of the powerful Daley family (though the current Mayor Daley moved his family to a fancy town house development in the South Loop), centers on 35th Street and Halsted; just southwest of there is Canaryville, also still largely Irish. Around Lincoln Square, near Lawrence and Western avenues, the neighborhood's German heritage lingers at spots like Delicatessen Meyer (Tel 773/561-3377) and Café Selmarie (Tel 773/989-5595), both on Lincoln Avenue. There's a bustling but small Chinatown on the South Side, with Cermak and Wentworth avenues as its focal point, filled with restaurants, retail, and Chinese people. A very little Little Italy along Taylor Street (around 1500 west) is still populated by many Italians and home to a slew of restaurants. Greek Town, on Halsted between Adams and Monroe streets, has many good restaurants but is really an invention of clever marketing, not an authentic neighborhood.

Up-and-comers... Pilsen has come full circle, from Bohemia to bohemian. Settled from about 1870 to the early 1950s by immigrant Czechs (the name Pilsen comes from what was once Bohemia's second-largest city), it evolved into a Mexican neighborhood, and its main drag, 18th Street, is still lined with Mexican diners and taquerías, small, family-owned grocery stores, bakeries, and music shops blaring the latest salsa onto the street. The **Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum** is here, as well as many colorful outdoor murals, and side streets around the intersection of 18th and Halsted streets are lined with generally well-kept narrow rowhouses and tenements, their stoops serving as places for old people, kids, and families to sit and watch, as well as be

a part of, the lively passing parade. In recent years, however, lower-case-b bohemians have returned in the form of local artists who have discovered Pilsen's large loftlike spaces and reasonable rents. Now as you stroll the streets, in addition to salsa music wafting through the air and families shopping and kibitzing in Spanish, you'll also see a healthy number of nose-pierced, goatee'd people. Wicker Park, Bucktown, and Ukrainian Village, all of which are northwest of the Loop, were also originally home to various Eastern European immigrant groups. But, like Pilsen, in the past decade these neighborhoods have been "discovered" by artists and others seeking cheaper rents—which of course attracted real-estate developers who rehabbed apartment after apartment, which jacked up the rents, forcing many of the second wave of settlers to move elsewhere. Still, the neighborhoods have a funky, urbane feel; while still home to many artists, they're getting yuppier by the day, creating an odd mix of small clubs featuring loud live music, coffee houses sponsoring poetry readings and performance art, art galleries, antiques stores, and upscale restaurants attracting BMW-driving suburbanites. Farther south, in what is now referred to as "the South Loop," home to miles and miles of new town house developments and, uh, new town house developments, is the **National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum,** the only museum in the world with a permanent collection focusing on the subject of war from the personal point of view. Its perspective is one with a universal message to all generations and all cultures and is adamantly apolitical and without bias. It collects, preserves, and exhibits a historically significant collection of art and artifacts for presentation to a broad audience. The museum is a great addition to an otherwise bland, white-bread section of the city, even if the mayor does live nearby (in, you guessed it, a new town house development).

You bowl me over... Looking for some no-attitude fun? Chicago has some of the neatest bowling alleys around. Downtown, **10pin** is a modern interpretation of the classic bowling alley, tucked underneath the Marina Towers complex on the Chicago River. Everything feels bright and new here (even the rental shoes!), and there's a full menu of

designer beers and upscale snacks. Even more distinctive is tiny, four-lane **Southport Lanes,** housed in an old Schlitz tavern in Lake View. No newfangled things like automatic pin resets here—there are actual and *live* pin-boys to do the job. There are pool tables, too, and an outdoor cafe.

School daze... Chicago has many universities within its borders, but three really deserve a visit. The **Illinois Institute of Technology** may not be the city's most prestigious institution of higher learning, but it's definitely its most architecturally significant one—in fact, in 1976 it was designated one of the 200 most important works of architecture in the United States by the American Institute of Architecture. Designed from 1942 to 1958, primarily by the great Mies van der Rohe, it is a perfect example of a once revolutionary modernist style which has since become classic. **Crown Hall** (3360 S. State St.) and the Robert F. Carr Memorial St. Savior Chapel (65 E. 32nd St.) are the most distinguished buildings on the 100-acre campus. It's not particularly pretty—frankly, it's a fairly monotonous collection of boxy low-rise buildings laid out one after another like children's building blocks. Talk about "less is more." Still, there is an undeniable look to the place—clean and spare, and oddly satisfying in its rectilinear-ness. For a different take on campus life, stroll around the urbane 175-acre **University of Chicago,** founded in 1892 by John D. Rockefeller, in Hyde Park. A Gothic-style fantasia, with many buildings adorned with intricate gargoyles, fine-pitched arches, and towers, the campus seeks to copy its British rivals, Oxford and Cambridge. Many of the buildings have lushly-planted courtyards, and benches throughout make terrific spots for a lazy day spent reading out-of-doors. There are some big, ugly, modern buildings, too, but they're well integrated into the campus. Don't miss the extraordinarily beautiful Rockefeller Chapel (1156 E. 59th St.), which houses the world's second-largest carillon. Both the **Oriental Institute Museum,** with its fine collection of archaeological finds, and the **Smart Museum of Art** are worthwhile stops as well. Hyde Park itself is one of the best-integrated middle-class neighborhoods in any urban area, with some Frank Lloyd Wright masterpieces scattered about, ***but one word of warning:*** It borders some very nasty places, so meandering around at night is not a

very good idea. You can take the el to **Northwestern University** in Evanston, but if you have a car, use it—the ride north along the lakeshore is beautiful. Founded in 1855, the campus is filled with Gothic buildings and looks just as you imagine a college should look: bucolic, impressive, daunting, solid. Tours are available, whether you're considering sending Junior there or not.

The best views in Lake View... Just north of Lincoln Park lies Lake View, bordered by the lake, Ashland Avenue, Diversey Parkway, and Irving Park Road, an also-gentrified neighborhood of funky stores, even funkier small theaters, and beautiful tree-lined residential streets. Broadway, Halsted, and Clark streets are the area's main north–south drags; Diversey Parkway and Belmont Avenue are the main east–west streets. Each of these is lined with stores and boutiques specializing in everything from piercings to ultra-chic fashions. And, of course, Lincoln Park snakes along Lake View's eastern edge, with the **Waveland Golf Course** (see the Getting Outside chapter), tennis courts, baseball diamonds, and other recreational facilities. A lot of people might warn you to stay away from the five square blocks that surround **Wrigley Field** on a game day (that is, when the Cubs are at home) unless you're actually attending the game—the traffic is at a standstill, the sidewalks are jammed, there are honky-tonk bands playing on the corners, and souvenir hawkers everywhere. But, for the adventurous, that's exactly when to go, because it's fun, plain and simple. There's electricity in the air, anticipation of a good time, and hope that maybe the Cubs will pull it off. Your best bet is to go to the game, but even if you're just walking around before heading elsewhere, it's a scene worth being a part of. A bit south of the ballpark lies what is considered **"Boys' Town,"** the city's sort of gay ghetto. On any given night the sidewalks along Halsted Street between Belmont Avenue and Irving Park Road are jammed with gay men in search of everything from a good time at the clubs to a quart of milk at the 24-hour 7-Eleven. Here you'll find restaurants, bars, dance clubs, and boutiques. The streets nearest the lake, though now mostly lined with apartments, used to be lined with beautiful houses; see "Blasts from the past," above, for descriptions of Hutchinson Street (4200 north at the lake), Hawthorne Street (3400 north at the lake), and Alta Vista Terrace (3800 north at Grace St.).

Rock Around the World

The impressive, gothic ***Tribune Tower,*** *just north of the Chicago River on the east side of Michigan Avenue, is home to one of the country's media giants and the Chicago Tribune newspaper. But it's also notable for an array of architectural fragments jutting out from the exterior. The collection was started shortly after the building's completion in 1925 by the newspaper's notoriously despotic publisher, Robert R. McCormick, who gathered them during his world travels.* Tribune *correspondents then began supplying building fragments that they acquired on assignment. Each one now bears the name of the structure and country whence it came. There are 138 pieces in all, including chunks and shards from the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal, the White House, the Arc de Triomphe, the Berlin Wall, the Roman Colosseum, London's Houses of Parliament, the Great Pyramid of Cheops in Giza, Egypt, and the original tomb of Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, IL.*

Overhyped experiences... "Taste of Chicago," an annual week-long feast that culminates July Fourth weekend, started out as a way to sample some of the finest food Chicago's restaurants had to offer, but it has evolved over the years into a hyperbolic and not-too-cheap outdoor gorge-fest. Much of the food is fried and fatty and messy, as well as astonishingly mundane, considering that some of the city's best restaurants ply their delicacies here. The food festival—the world's largest—is not only a pig-out, it becomes a pigsty, as more than four million people jam into Grant Park on Columbus Drive between Jackson and Randolph streets to sample all the different food. Girl-Power is great and all, but the **American Girl Place,** on East Chicago Avenue, feels more like a giant piece of propaganda than a center for estrogen empowerment. Based on the runaway success of its line of dolls, the American Girl Company has created a retail mecca for the pre-teen set in search of mini-accessories for their little inanimate friends. There's even a restaurant and theater to round out the day's activities. Both the Gold Coast Art Fair and the Old Town Art Fair are losers, too, unless you like sentimental color photographs of the city's skyline, pastels of children and dogs, abstract oil paintings that defy description, landscape watercolors, and lots and lots and lots of pottery. Serious art lovers are better off going to galleries in River North. And if anyone tells you to go to the Biograph Theater to see anything other than a movie, don't listen. Yes, it's true that gangster supreme John Dillinger was tricked into attending a screening of *Manhattan Melodrama* on July 22, 1934, and

instead became the object of his own real-life drama when tricky-fingered government dicks gunned him down in the alley next door. But there aren't any bloodstains remaining or a faded chalk outline for you to gawk at—all that remains is...an alley. Unless you want to take a snapshot of the garbage cans from the Mexican restaurant next door, don't bother. There were high expectations when the **Chicago White Sox** (see the Entertainment chapter) moved into a new Comiskey Park in 1991. The park has since been renamed—in true corporate-America style—U.S. Cellular Field, and the overall aura is still as sterile as the name. The park was supposed to be a modern show palace, a place to see baseball with the whole family. Well, yes, it is that, of course, but the whole experience is very antiseptic at best, and vertigo-inducing in the higher, cheaper seats (seriously—I felt like I was about to fall out every time I leaned over to watch a play). Another downside: Unlike Wrigley Field, which sits in the middle of a vibrant neighborhood, U.S. Cellular Field is plunked down in the midst of highways and housing projects—fans stream in by train or car, see the game, and get out as quickly as possible. Not exactly a place to sit and savor the city.

Tour time... It's not unusual to see red double-decker tour buses moving slow as snails through bumper-to-bumper traffic on Michigan Avenue, as tourists from who-knows-where get told who-knows-what by who-knows-whom. Here are some of the tours that are worth your time: The first-rate **Chicago Architecture Foundation** (Tel 312/922-3432) organizes regular tours of the Prairie Avenue District, including the Glessner and Clarke houses, as well as river cruises, bus tours, and scores of walking tours of specific buildings, streets, districts, and neighborhoods, from the Loop to Hyde Park to the Gold Coast. The foundation also offers both walking and bus tours of Frank Lloyd Wright's greatest hits, a bike tour of suburban Winnetka, and scores of others, more than 60 tours in all. Tour fees vary from $10 for a walking tour of, say, Alta Vista Terrace, to $21 for river cruises (daily May–Oct), to $25 for bus tours covering 30 miles of the Loop, Hyde Park, the Gold Coast, and other historic districts. You may also want

to stop by the foundation's **shop** (224 S. Michigan Ave.), one of the best places to buy souvenirs that actually mean something. The **Oak Park Visitors Center** (Tel 888/OAK-PARK) offers daily tours of that suburb's incredible collection of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, a former resident who designed many homes, as well as his internationally renowned Unity Temple, here. For more than 10 years, **Tour Black Chicago** (Tel 312/332-2323; www.tourblackchicago.com) has offered visitors daily, customized tours of the points of interest that illustrate African-American history in Chicago. It visits the DuSable Museum, the Bee Building, and the South Side Community Arts Building, among many other sites. And, the **Chicago Trolley Co.** (Tel 773/648-5000) operates a daily, old-fashioned hop-on-and-hop-off trolley car, which runs throughout the North Michigan Avenue and Loop areas. The cost is $20 adults, $10 for children 3 through 11.

Off the beaten track... If you're looking for a tour with extra entertainment value, two local companies offer in-depth looks at Chicago's shadier side. I'd recommend both for older kids and teenagers who refuse to be caught dead on a "look-at-all-these-old-buildings" hike. The Untouchable Tour (Tel 773/881-1195) brings Chicago's gangland past alive, concentrating on the hoodlum hangouts of such guys as John Dillinger, Al Capone, "Bugs" Moran, and others, as well as the site of the St. Valentine's Day massacre (which is now in the shadow of a retirement home) and the hotel from which Al Capone ruled his evil empire ($24 adults, $18 children). Richard Crowe, who claims he's the only "full-time professional ghost hunter in the Midwest," runs Chicago Supernatural Tours (Tel 708/499-0300), which feature legends, lore, and ghost stories of Chicagoland cemeteries, murder sites, gangsters, and haunted pubs, all while cruising the city on a bus. The four-hour tours cost $37 per person and include a snack stop. In the summer, Crowe offers two-hour supernatural cruises on a boat called the Mercury Skyline Queen ($24). While it all sounds very hokey, both the Untouchable Tour and the Supernatural Tour offer up a healthy dose of history, making them somewhat (gasp!) educational.

Map 9: Magnificent Mile & River North Diversions

American Girl Place **3**
Chicago Children's Museum **5**
John Hancock Center Observation Deck **2**
Merchandise Mart **7**
Museum of Contemporary Art **4**
Newberry Library **1**
10pin **6**

Map 10: The Loop Diversions

Art Institute of Chicago **4**
Buckingham Fountain **7**
Chicago Architecture Foundation **5**
Chicago Board of Trade **3**
Harold Washington Library Center **6**
Merchandise Mart **1**
Sears Tower Skydeck **2**
Spertus Museum of Judaica **8**

Map 11: Hyde Park Diversions

The Index

Adler Planetarium (p. 96) MUSEUM CAMPUS Besides the great Sky Show in the domed theater, the Adler offers three floors of interactive exhibits.... *Tel 312/922-7827. www.adlerplanetarium.org. 1300 S. Lake Shore Dr., at Lake Michigan. Bus 12 or 146. Daily 9:30am–4:30pm, until 10pm on the first Fri of the month. Admission (including one show) $13 adults, $12 seniors, $11 children 4–17.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

American Girl Place (p. 115) MAGNIFICENT MILE A growing phenomenon among young girls, the American Girl Company has expanded from its signature dolls to incorporate books, a magazine, shows, and this enormous store in downtown Chicago. Not only can you and your pre-teen girl shop for dolls and accessories here, there's also a cafe (where AG dolls get their own seat at the table), and a live musical revue, starring, you guessed it, a group of very excitable teenage girls.... *Tel 312/255-9876. www.americangirlplace.com. 111 E. Chicago Ave, at Michigan Ave. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Mon–Wed 10am–7pm, Thurs–Fri 10am–9pm, Sat 9:30am–9pm, Sun 9:30am–7pm. Musical revue $26, performance times vary. Reservations accepted for ages 6 and up.*

See Map 9 on p. 118.

Art Institute of Chicago (p. 89) THE LOOP Check out every kind of painting you ever studied in art history class here, along with Asian sculpture, historic furniture and decorative arts, modern masterpieces, and even an impressive display of swords and armor. The massive gift shop is also worth a stop.... *Tel 312/443-3600. www.artic.edu. 111 S. Michigan Ave., at Adams St. Monroe el stop (Red Line) or Adams el stop (Brown Line). Mon–Fri 10:30am–4:30pm (Tues until 8pm), Sat–Sun 10am–5pm. Suggested admission $10 adults, $6 seniors and children 3–12. Admission free on Tues.*

See Map 10 on p. 119.

Brookfield Zoo (p. 97) WESTERN SUBURBS Brookfield is home to almost 3,000 animals, all living in different "natural" environments (don't miss Tropic World, an indoor monkey habitat where you walk at tree-top level for close-up views). Driving is the easiest way to

get here (as long as you avoid rush hour), or take a Burlington Northern train from Union Station to Hollywood.... *Tel 708/485-0263. www.brookfieldzoo.org. 3300 Golf Rd., Brookfield. Sept–May daily 10am–5pm, Jun–Aug daily 9:30am–6pm. Admission $8 adults, $4 seniors and children 3–11.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Buckingham Fountain **(p. 90)** THE LOOP This ornate lakeside fountain presides over the Loop.... *Grant Park, at Congress Parkway. Harrison el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 10 on p. 119.

Chicago Architecture Foundation **(p. 90)** THE LOOP This first-rate organization devoted to Chicago's architecture and design operates scores of tours.... *Tel 312/922-TOUR (recorded information), 312/922-3432 (office). www.architecture.org. 224 S. Michigan Ave., at Jackson St. Jackson el stop (Red Line). $10–$15 for walking tours.*

See Map 10 on p. 119.

Chicago Board of Trade **(p. 102)** THE LOOP Not only stocks and bonds but all sorts of tangible commodities, including wheat, are traded here. During trading hours, the scene is loud, chaotic, and almost overwhelming.... *Tel 312/435-3590. 141 W. Jackson Blvd., at LaSalle St. LaSalle/Van Buren el stop (Brown Line) or Jackson el stop (Red Line). Closed to the general public since 9/11/01, but private tours can be arranged for groups.*

See Map 10 on p. 119.

Chicago Children's Museum **(p. 97)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Three floors of unique, fun, hands-on exhibits.... *Tel 312/527-1000. www.chichildrensmuseum.org. 700 E. Grand Ave., at Navy Pier. Grand el stop (Red Line), then Grand Ave. bus or free Navy Pier trolley. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm (until 8pm Thurs). Admission $7 adults and children, $6 seniors, free for children under 1.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.
See Map 9 on p. 118.

Chicago Historical Society **(p. 92)** LINCOLN PARK Here you'll find impressive Civil War and Abraham Lincoln artifacts (including the bed where he died) and some lively, imaginative temporary exhibits. The Historical Society is also known for its extensive costume collection; pieces are displayed on a rotating basis.... *Tel 312/642-4600. www.chicagohistory.org. 1601 N. Clark St., at North Ave. Bus 151, 22, or 36. Mon–Sat 9:30am–4:30pm, Sun noon–5pm. Admission $5 adults, $3 seniors, $1 children 6–12, free admission Mon.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Clarke House **(p. 108)** SOUTH LOOP Built in 1836, this is the city's oldest surviving building. The home, furnished with period pieces, recreates life when Chicago was just a town on the

prairie. Tours start at the coach house behind Glessner House (see below).... *Tel 312/326-1480. www.glessnerhouse.org. 1821 S. Prairie Ave., at 18th St. Bus 1, 3, or 4 from Michigan Ave. Tours Wed–Sun at noon, 1, and 2pm. Admission $9 adults, $8 seniors, $5 children 5–12.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

DuSable Museum of African American History **(p. 88)** HYDE PARK The DuSable traces the history of the black experience in America. Permanent exhibits include "Blacks in Aviation" (including the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II) and a celebration of Harold Washington, Chicago's first black mayor.... *Tel 773/947-0600. www.dusablemuseum.org. 740 E. 56th Place, at Cottage Grove Ave. METRA train to 57th St. and Lake Park Ave. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun noon–5pm. Admission $3 adults, $2 seniors, $1 children 6–13, free admission Sun.*

See Map 11 on p. 120.

Field Museum of Natural History **(p. 90)** MUSEUM CAMPUS Lions and tigers and bears, stuffed and on display, along with dinosaurs and enormous interactive exhibits are what you'll find here. The Ancient Egypt section is a long-time favorite of local families (with hands-on activities for kids), and an ever-changing selection of temporary special exhibits keeps the crowds coming.... *Tel 312/922-9410. www.fieldmuseum.org. Roosevelt Rd. and Lake Shore Dr. Bus 6 or 146. Daily 9am–5pm. Admission $10 adults, $7 seniors, $5 children 3–11.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio **(p. 108)** OAK PARK The house and adjoining work studio built by one of the country's most influential architects offer a fascinating glimpse at Wright's design philosophy in action. Admission is by guided tour only.... *Tel 708/848-1976. www.wrightplus.org. 951 Chicago Ave., at Forest Ave. Harlem el stop (Green Line). Tours Mon–Fri 11am, 1, and 3pm; Sat–Sun every 20 minutes 11am–3:30pm. Admission $9 adults, $7 seniors and children 7–18.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Glessner House **(p. 108)** SOUTH LOOP A restored mansion designed by Henry Hobson Richardson in the Prairie Avenue Historic District, this imposing stone exterior was a revolutionary shift from Victorian architecture (and inspired a young Frank Lloyd Wright).... *Tel 312/326-1480. www.glessnerhouse.org. 1800 S. Prairie Ave., at 18th St. Bus 1, 3, or 4. Tours Wed–Sun at 1, 2, and 3pm. Admission $9 adults, $8 seniors, $5 children 5–12.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Harold Washington Library Center **(p. 102)** THE LOOP The largest municipal library in the nation.... Tel 312/747-4400. www.chipublib.org. 400 S. State St., between Van Buren St. and

Congress Pkwy. Library/Van Buren el stop (Brown Line) or Jackson el stop (Red Line). Mon–Thurs 9am–7pm, Fri–Sat 9am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm. Free admission.

See Map 10 on p. 119.

Hull House (p. 108) NEAR WEST SIDE Former home of social worker Jane Addams and her American settlement-house movement.... *Tel 773/413-5353. www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull. 800 S. Halsted St., at Polk St. Halsted/University of Illinois el stop (Blue Line). Tues–Fri 10am–4pm, Sun noon–4pm. Free admission.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Illinois Institute of Technology (p. 107) SOUTH SIDE This 100-acre campus is a Bauhaus collection unlike any other in the country.... *Tel 312/567-3000. www.iit.edu. 3300 S. Federal St., at 33rd St. 35-Bronzeville-IIT el stop (Green Line).*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

International Museum of Surgical Science (p. 96) GOLD COAST Medical implements plus a re-created turn-of-the-century drugstore.... *Tel 312/642-6502. www.imss.org. 1524 N. Lake Shore Dr., between Burton Place and North Ave. Bus 151. Year-round Tues–Sat 10am–4pm, May–Sept only Sun 10am–4pm. Admission $6 adults, $3 seniors, free for children 12 and under.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

John Hancock Center Observation Deck (p. 97) MAGNIFICENT MILE Located on the skyscraper's 94th floor, the Skydeck provides unparalleled views for miles, and miles, and miles.... *Tel 312/751-3681. www.hancock-observatory.com. 875 N. Michigan Ave., between Delaware Place and Walton St. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Daily 9am–11pm. Admission $9.75 adults, $7.75 seniors, $6 children 5–12.*

See Map 9 on p. 118.

Lincoln Park Zoo (p. 97) LINCOLN PARK The most visited zoo in the country; highlights include a great 260,000-gallon polar bear tank and the kid-friendly Farm-in-a-Zoo.... *Tel 312/742-2000. www.lpzoo.com. 2200 N. Cannon Dr., at Fullerton Ave. Bus 151. Daily 9am–5pm. Free admission.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Merchandise Mart (p. 106) RIVER NORTH More than 4 million square feet of furniture and fabric showrooms, open only to professional designers. But you can take a peek by signing up for one of the weekly tours.... *Tel 312/527-7600. www.merchandisemart.com/mmart. 350 N. Wells St., between Kinzie St. and the Chicago River. Merchandise Mart el stop (Brown Line). Tours Fri at 1pm. $10 adults, $8 seniors and students.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.
See Map 9 on p. 118.
See Map 10 on p. 119.

Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum (p. 95) PILSEN In Pilsen, this small museum showcases contemporary Mexican and Mexican-American art.... *Tel 312/738-1503. www.mfacmchicago.org. 1852 W. 19th St., between Wolcott Ave. and Wood St. 18th St. el stop (Blue Line). Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. Free admission.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Museum of Contemporary Art (p. 94) MAGNIFICENT MILE This grand space designed by German architect Josef Paul Kleihus looks like an unwelcoming fortress from the outside, but walk in and you're surrounded by bright, soaring spaces that show off an ever-changing array of thought-provoking works.... *Tel 312/280-2660. www.mcachicago.org. 220 E. Chicago Ave., at Fairbanks Court. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Tues 10am–8pm, Wed–Sun 10am–5pm. Admission $10 adults, $6 seniors, free for children 12 and under.*

See Map 9 on p. 118.

Museum of Science and Industry (p. 90) HYDE PARK With its host of high-tech interactive displays, children love, love, love this museum; adults love it, too. Great gift shop as well.... *Tel 773/684-1414. www.msichicago.org. 57th St. and Lake Shore Dr. METRA train to 57th St. and Lake Park Ave. Daily 9:30am–4pm (until 5:30pm Memorial Day to Labor Day). Admission $9 adults, $7.50 seniors, $5 children 3–11.*

See Map 11 on p. 120.

National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum (p. 112) SOUTH LOOP Houses more than 700 works of fine art created by 115 artists who participated in the Vietnam War. All of the pieces chronicle their individual experiences in that conflict. The artists come from the United States, Australia, Cambodia, Thailand, and North and South Vietnam.... *Tel 312/326-0270. www.nvvam.org. 1801 S. Indiana Ave., at 18th St. Bus 3 or 4. Tues–Fri 11am–6pm, Sat 10am–5pm, Sun noon–5pm. Admission $6 adults, $5 seniors, free for children 12 and under.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Newberry Library (p. 102) MAGNIFICENT MILE This is an independent research library concentrating in the humanities; it's privately funded, but open to the public. Highlights of the collection are displayed on a rotating basis; the library also has an excellent genealogy section for anyone interested in tracing their roots.... *Tel 312/943-9090. www.newberry.org. 60 W. Walton St., between Dearborn and Clark sts. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Tues–Thurs 10am–6pm, Fri–Sat 9am–5pm (closed Sat before Mon holidays); tours given Thurs at 3pm and Sat at 10:30am. Free admission.*

See Map 9 on p. 118.

Northwestern University (p. 114) NORTH SUBURBS Just what you think a university campus should look like: Tudor Revival mansion, idyllic lawns, and fresh-faced students.... *Tel 847/491-3741. www.northwestern.edu. Sheridan Rd. and Clark St., Evanston. Howard el stop (Red Line), then transfer to Purple Line. Tours run frequently, starting from admissions office.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Oak Park Visitors Center (p. 108) WEST SUBURBS Frank Lloyd Wright forever put Oak Park on the map by designing many of its finest homes, as well as the **Unity Temple.** Stop here to pick up maps and audio walking tours.... *Tel 888/OAK-PARK. www.visitoakpark.com. 158 N. Forest Ave., at Lake St., Oak Park. Harlem el stop (Green Line). Daily 10am–5pm. Free admission.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Oriental Institute Museum (p. 94) HYDE PARK Housed in a Gothic building on the University of Chicago campus, the Oriental Institute exhibits centuries-worth of art from the Near East. Small but intriguing souk-cum-gift-shop.... *Tel 773/702-9514. www.oi.uchicago.edu. 1155 E. 58th St., at University Ave. METRA train to 57th St. and Lake Park Ave. Tues–Sat 10am–4pm (until 8:30pm on Wed), Sun noon–4pm. Suggested donation $5 adults, $2 children under 12.*

See Map 11 on p. 120.

Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum (p. 96) LINCOLN PARK Exhibits here examine the relationship between people and nature, exploring the ways humans constantly both celebrate and endanger their environment. The Butterfly Haven is a highlight.... *Tel 773/755-5100. www.chias.org. 2430 N. Cannon Dr., at Fullerton Ave. Bus 151. Mon–Fri 9am–4:30pm, Sat–Sun 10am–5pm. Admission $7 adults, $5 seniors, $4 children 3–12. Free admission Thurs.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Polish Museum of America (p. 95) NEAR NORTH SIDE This museum is devoted to art and artifacts from Poland.... *Tel 773/384-3352. http://pma.prcua.org. 984 N. Milwaukee Ave., at Augusta Blvd. Division el stop (Blue Line). Fri–Wed 11am–4pm. Admission $3 adults, $1 children under 12.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Prairie Avenue Historic District (p. 108) SOUTH LOOP This neighborhood, south of the Loop, was Chicago's first Millionaires' Row, where Victorian moguls built their mansions. You can see all the highlights by taking a walking tour; sign up at the coach house behind Glessner House (see above).... *Tel 312/326-1480. S. Prairie Ave. between 18th and 20th sts. Bus 1, 3, or 4. Tours year-round Sun at 1 and 2pm, May–Oct also on the first and third Sat*

of the month at 1 and 2pm. Tour admission $9 adults, $8 seniors, $5 children 5–12.

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Robie House **(p. 91)** HYDE PARK One of Frank Lloyd Wright's greatest works, this house exemplifies the Prairie Style for which he is famous.... *Tel 773/834-1847. www.wrightplus.org. 5757 S. Woodlawn Ave., at 57th St. METRA train to 57th St. and Lake Park Ave. Tours daily at 11am, 1, and 3pm weekdays, every half-hour from 11am–3:30pm on weekends. Admission $9 adults, $7 seniors and children 7–18.*

See Map 11 on p. 120.

St. Michael's **(p. 99)** OLD TOWN Built by German immigrants in 1866, this church was destroyed by the Great Chicago Fire in 1871—yet the icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help survived. It continues to be on display, a symbol of the neighborhood's will to survive after the fire's devastation.... *Tel 312/642-2498. 1633 N. Cleveland Ave., at North Ave. Sedgwick el stop (Brown Line). Daily 8am–7pm. Free admission.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Sears Tower Skydeck **(p. 97)** THE LOOP The observatory deck here is located on the 103rd floor, nine floors higher than the one at the Hancock Center (and despite the "skydeck" name, it's all indoors). On a clear day, you can see for up to 50 miles.... *Tel 312/875-9696. www.the-skydeck.com. 233 S. Wacker Dr., at Jackson Blvd. Quincy/Wells el stop (Brown Line). Daily 10am–8pm (until 10pm May–Sept). Admission $9.95 adults, $7.95 seniors, $6.95 children 3–11.*

See Map 10 on p. 119.

Shedd Aquarium **(p. 96)** MUSEUM CAMPUS The world's largest aquarium, it features Beluga and Pacific black whales, sharks, turtles, eels, sea anemones, and a 60,000-gallon penguin habitat. The two large permanent exhibits (the Oceanarium, with beluga whales and dolphins) and Wild Reef (sharks), each require separate admission charges, in addition to the standard aquarium admission.... *Tel 312/939-2438. www.sheddaquarium.org. 1200 S. Lake Shore Dr., at Lake Michigan. Bus 146. Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, until 6pm Sat–Sun and weekdays Memorial Day to Labor Day. Admission for aquarium and all special exhibits (including the Oceanarium and Wild Reef) $21 adults, $15 seniors and children 3–11; admission to aquarium only $8 adults, $6 seniors and children 3–11.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Smart Museum of Art **(p. 94)** HYDE PARK The University of Chicago's encyclopedic art collection includes such works as sculpture by Rodin and Degas, modern paintings by Mark Rothko

and Diego Rivera, and many other unexpected treasures.... *Tel 773/702-0200. http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu. 5550 S. Greenwood Ave., at 55th St. METRA train to 57th St. and Lake Park Ave. Tues, Wed, Fri 10am–4pm, Thurs 10am–8pm, Sat–Sun 11am–5pm. Free admission.*

See Map 11 on p. 120.

Southport Lanes **(p. 113)** WRIGLEYVILLE There are no newfangled things like automatic pin resets at this four-lane bowling alley; live pin-boys do the job.... *Tel 773/472-6600. 3325 N. Southport Ave., at Henderson St. Southport el stop (Brown Line). Mon–Fri 4pm–1am, Sat noon–2am, Sun noon–1am. About $20–$30 per hour per lane.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

Spertus Museum of Judaica **(p. 94)** THE LOOP Jewish art and artifacts, from ritual objects to paintings and sculpture.... Tel 312/322-1747. www.spertus.edu. 618 S. Michigan Ave., at Balbo Dr. Harrison el stop (Red Line). Sun–Wed 10am–5pm, Thurs 10am–7pm, Fri 10am–3pm. Admission $5 adults, $3 seniors and children 3–12, admission free on Fri.

See Map 10 on p. 119.

Swedish-American Museum Center **(p. 110)** ANDERSONVILLE Dedicated to the history of the city's Swedish population, the highlight of this museum is the immigration exhibit for children, where kids can pretend to ride a mini-steamer ship to America, and learn about life in a pioneer's log cabin.... *Tel 773/728-8111. www.samac.org. 5211 N. Clark St., at Foster Ave. Berwyn el stop (Red Line). Tues–Fri 10am–4pm, Sat–Sun 11am–4pm. Admission $4 adults, $3 seniors and children 2–12.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

10pin **(p. 112)** RIVER NORTH Bowling gets swank at this new 24-lane alley in the corncob-shaped Marina Towers complex. Snack on upscale appetizers (designer pizzas, smoked salmon, etc.) while waiting to take a shot. Bonus: The rental shoes haven't been worn by thousands of people before you.... *Tel 312/644-0300. 330 N. State St., between Kinzie St. and the Chicago River. Grand el stop (Red Line). Sun–Thurs 11am–midnight, Fri 11am–2 am, Sat 11am–3am. $6.95 per person per game.*

See Map 9 on p. 118.

Unity Temple **(p. 108)** OAK PARK The cubelike design of this church was revolutionary at the time—just as architect Frank Lloyd Wright intended. It's now considered one of the landmarks of early modern architecture (and it's still used for religious services).... *Tel 708/383-8873. www.unitytemple-utrf.org. 875 Lake St., at Kenilworth Ave., Oak Park. Harlem el stop (Green Line). Mon–Fri 10:30am–4:30pm, Sat–Sun 1–4pm. Admission $6 adults, $4 seniors and children 5–11.*

See Map 8 on p. 86.

University of Chicago **(p. 103)** HYDE PARK 175 acres of gorgeous Gothic buildings define one of the country's finest universities.... *Tel 773/753-1234. Between 56th and 59th sts., west of Woodlawn Ave. METRA train to 57th St. and Lake Park Ave. Guided tours Sat only at 10am from Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E. 59th St.*

See Map 11 on p. 120.

GETTING

OUTSIDE

4

Chicago may be a big city, but it's a big city on a lake—on a big lake—and what a difference that makes.

Chicagoans never get blasé about Lake Michigan sparkling on their doorstep. It is literally the city's living room, where people of all different races, classes, genders, orientations, religions, etc. meet, mingle, play together, listen to music together, and eat together. Chicago uses its lake like no other major city in the world, thanks in large part to forward-thinking urban planning of a century ago. Today, particularly in the summer months, the lakefront takes on the feel of one big urban resort, with boating, swimming, biking, beach volleyball, whatever your pleasure. Forget Club Med. Two huge green parks, named Grant and Lincoln, fan off from the lake, and a string of public beaches within city limits invites one and all to enjoy the water. There's no need to drive to the suburbs or a faraway rural area in search of a golf course or bike path, either. It's all here.

The Lowdown

Parks... At one time, it was possible to walk in a huge arc through the city without touching pavement, via parks and boulevards. Accordingly, the city's motto is *Urbs in Horto,* which means City in a Garden. Nice sentiment—too bad it's no longer true (apartment buildings and strip malls fill the city's borders now, not flowerbeds and hedgerows). But Chicago does have incredible parks—in fact, it has more than 7,300 acres of parkland. Take 220-acre **Grant Park,** for instance. Spreading out on landfill between Michigan Avenue and the lake (with Randolph Street as its northern border), it was designed in the 1920s by Daniel Burnham and supposedly inspired by the gardens at Versailles. With the Loop's skyscrapers looming so near, Versailles may not be your first thought when you see Grant Park; it's more like the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris, a highly civilized green space plunked down right in the middle of a big city. Grant Park offers everything a grand city park should—impressive formal gardens, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, ice skating in winter and roller skating in summer, and vast areas of grass for lounging, loafing, picnicking, or protesting (remember the 1968 Democratic Convention?). Some of the city's biggest summer music events are held at the park's **Petrillo Music Shell:** blues and country music

festivals in June, pop concerts around the 4th of July, and a jazz festival in August. Grant Park's most notable feature is the baroque Buckingham Fountain, as seen in the opening credits of the TV show *Married...with Children.* It's a well-known make-out spot and the setting for many a marriage proposal.

The northwest corner of Grant Park has recently been jazzed up and renamed **Millennium Park** (it was supposed to be finished in 2000, but—shockingly for a major municipal project—it ended up running a few years behind schedule). The park's eye-catching centerpiece is the **Pritzker Music Pavilion,** a dramatic band shell designed by Frank Gehry (you can spot his signature curved metal roof from a block away). The Grant Park Symphony and Chorus gives free concerts here during June, July, and August.

Even bigger than Grant Park is **Lincoln Park,** running right along the lake north of North Avenue. Here, on 1,200 acres of near-perfect parkland, are meadows, sports facilities, formal gardens, wildflower gardens, beaches, harbors...the list goes on and on. Since the park borders on several thriving residential neighborhoods, it attracts all sorts of people. For a dizzying burst of humidity, walk into the **Lincoln Park Conservatory** (Tel 773/742-7736; 2400 N. Stockton Dr.), 3 acres of greenhouses erected in 1891, including a palm house, a fern house, a tropical house, and a show house. There's something weirdly Victorian about prowling around here and sniffing out some of the more exotic species in this hothouse. Just outside the conservatory's entrance lies the park's main garden, almost 300,000 dazzling square feet of flowers. By far the biggest attraction in the park is the **Lincoln Park Zoo** (see the Diversions chapter).

Another park well worth visiting is **Jackson Park** (Tel 773/747-2200; E. 63rd St. and Stoney Island Ave.), built on landfill originally used for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, who also created Central Park in New York City, this bit of greenery is home to one of the city's greatest attractions, the **Museum of Science and Industry** (see the Diversions chapter), which is housed in a stone re-creation of the exhibition's Palace of Fine Arts. Jackson Park also features baseball diamonds, basketball courts, two dozen tennis

A Few Good Men in Lincoln Park

Statues of notable historic figures (some more famous than others) are scattered among the trees and bike paths of Lincoln Park. Busy joggers and bikers rush by them, but they're worth a look if you're strolling by. Politicians proliferate, from president Ulysses S. Grant (near 1900 N. Lake Shore Dr.) and statesman Alexander Hamilton (near Diversey Pkwy.) to John Peter Altgeld, a former governor of Illinois, immortalized in bronze near Lake Shore Drive. Then, of course, there's inventor and all-around good American Benjamin Franklin at LaSalle Street and Stockton Drive. Our favorite German poet and thinker, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, has been set down at Diversey Parkway, looking proud and very German—and blindingly bright, after a recent regilding. His compatriot, poet and playwright Friedrich Schiller, sits near Stockton Drive and Webster Street. The Bard himself, William Shakespeare, poses near Belden Avenue, surrounded by flowers. Kids' fave Hans Christian Andersen is near Armitage Street, and look for the Italian stallion, Giuseppe Garibaldi, between Stockton and Lake Shore drives.

courts, bicycle and bridle paths, and an 18-hole golf course and driving range (see "Par for the course," later in this chapter). After visiting the museum, stroll down to the tranquil Japanese garden on the park's southern end. It's a great spot for contemplation, with a soothing waterfall, rocks, water lilies, and a teahouse.

For more information on Grant Park, Lincoln Park, or any of the parks in the Chicago Park District, contact the Chicago Park District (Tel 312/742-PLAY; www.chicagoparkdistrict.com).

Mittless softball... Chicago is the only place where a 16-inch softball has elbowed out the 12-inch version. This variant of the old sandlot game uses no mitts, a slow pitch, and, obviously, a larger ball. Lots of beer and jammed fingers are involved, especially if the ball is new, and for some reason, people with massive beer bellies and really tall, thin guys are the only ones who can drive the ball deep. On the evolutionary scale of softballs, the 16-incher is a coelacanth, a vestige from the days of the game's invention as an indoor winter sport. Leagues play in the parks; to watch a game, try Lincoln Park, or Oz Park in the western sector of the Lincoln Park residential neighborhood.

Playing pick-up... Grant Park is known for softball and soccer on weekends in the playing fields south of the Art Institute. There are more than a dozen fields in the Upper

and Lower Hutchinson areas, many of which will be taken by organized office teams or leagues. But come looking prepared, and you could get lucky. In addition, there is a three-on-three basketball tournament—sponsored by the Bulls in past years—featuring local Be-Like-Mikes, which takes place every August on a special temporary court near 900 south, on the lake. You can also find a game of pick-up b-ball on virtually any school playground in the city—after school hours and on weekends. Levels of ability vary; if you're, say, a youngish guy who loves to play but can't jump, you might want to try a playground in the tamer Lincoln Park or Lake View neighborhoods. The courts in **Lincoln Park,** a short walk south of the zoo, are another good place to look for a pick-up game. Lincoln Park also has great touch football games near Belmont Avenue, usually on Sunday mornings, run by various sports leagues. Many of the leagues are organized by the **Chicago Sport and Social Club** (Tel 312/335-9596); they can clue you in on schedules and the chance of getting off the bench. Every Sunday afternoon in spring and summer, the gay crowd at **Hollywood Beach** (5800 north on the lake) has pick-up volleyball games.

Hitting the beaches... Some of Chicago's greatest summertime assets are the beaches that almost continuously line Lake Michigan. Some are smooth and sandy, others are craggier and not well-kept, so beware. If there's a sign that says "no swimming," heed its advice. Beaches are open Memorial Day through Labor Day, 9am to 9:30pm. Various beaches have distinct sensibilities. **North Avenue Beach,** for instance, attracts volleyball players, young families, in-line hockey players, and lots and lots of singles. **Oak Street Beach** is one of the most popular, due no doubt to its easy-to-get-to location near the Magnificent Mile and lots of hotels; its crowd seems to have arrived there right off the set of *The Bold and the Beautiful*—an alarming number of people with svelte bodies, sleek bathing suits, and slick tans. Farther up in the neighborhoods, **Foster Avenue Beach** (5200 north) attracts families, with convenient parking, a huge grassy area perfect for barbecuing, and a rollerblading path on the shore just inland from the sandy beach. Located just south of **Belmont Harbor,** though, a large green space has been annexed, more or less, by hordes of soccer and volleyball players. About two miles

north is **Hollywood Beach,** the "gay beach," although you'll find a sprinkling of families, too.

Ahoy there... It shouldn't come as a surprise that, between the lake and the river, Chicagoans are gaga for boating—on sailboats, cigarette speedsters, powerboats, houseboats, rowboats, even kayaks and canoes. At Belmont Harbor, you can take sailing lessons and rent sailboats from the **Chicago Sailing Club** (Tel 773/871-SAIL; www.chicagosailingclub.com), which offers a week-long basic course for around $395, or private instruction at $55 to $120 an hour for more experienced sailors; **Sailboats, Inc.** (Tel 312/861-1757 or 800/826-7010; www.sailboats-inc.com), which has a wider range of boats to rent, also runs two- and three-day clinics for various levels, which may set you back up to $900. If you have your own boat, the **Chicago Yacht Club** (www.chicagoyachtclub.org) has marinas at Monroe Harbor in Grant Park (Tel 312/861-7777) and Belmont Harbor (Tel 773/477-7575); the club is for members only, but members of yacht clubs in other cities have reciprocal use of the facilities. Boaters can also dock at **North Pier** (Tel 312/527-2002), alongside sightseeing cruise boats.

Can you canoe?... For a truly fresh perspective on Chicago's downtown, how about paddling your way between the skyscrapers that line the Chicago River? **Friends of the Chicago River** (Tel 312/939-0490; www.chicagoriver.org) organizes a wide variety of guided canoe trips—some out in the northern and southern suburbs, but some actually on the downtown stretches of the river (most trips cost $50–$65). There's at least one trip a week in summer; book a week ahead, if possible. All ages and sorts of people sign onto these outings, not just weathered pros. If you're more the seasoned canoer, know that the **Chicagoland Canoe Base** (Tel 773/777-1489; www.chicagolandcanoebase.com; 4019 N. Narragansett Ave.) not only sells both antique and new canoes but rents them as well ($40/day). Don't expect to negotiate whitewater, but about an hour's drive from the city, the lower Fox River and the Kishwaukee River out near Rockford are good canoeing rivers.

Sightseeing afloat... There's no dearth of boat tours on both the lake and the river. The most popular is the 90-minute **Wendella Sightseeing Boats** tour (Tel 312/337-1446;

www.wendellaboats.com; 400 N. Michigan Ave.; $18 adults, $16 seniors, $9 kids), which sets off April through October from the Wrigley Building. The route cruises along the Chicago River as it cuts through the Loop, then along the lake from the Adler Planetarium to Oak Street; take it at night for really stunning views. June through September, **Mercury Skyline Cruises** (Tel 312/332-1353; www.mercuryskylinecruiseline.com; Wacker Dr. and Michigan Ave.; $18 adults, $8 children under 12) and **Shoreline Sightseeing** (departing from both Navy Pier and the Shedd Aquarium; Tel 312/222-9328; www.shorelinesightseeing.com; $10–$22 adults, $9–$18 seniors, $5–$8 children under 12) give Wendella competition. The narration on these boats is pretty much your standard sightseeing spiel, however; for something a bit different, book a seat on one of the weekly sightseeing boat tours run by **Friends of the Chicago River** (Tel 312/939-0490; www.chicagoriver.org), whose focus is, predictably, the ecology of the Chicago River system. The **Chicago Architecture Foundation** (Tel 312/922-3432; www.architecture.org) offers insightful narrated boat trips on the river, too, focusing not only on the landmark buildings on its shore but also on the history of the river and the city's relation to it. These tours are popular, so it's best to buy tickets in advance (Ticketmaster Tel 312/902-1500); tickets cost $25, plus the annoying Ticketmaster surchage.

Pedal pushers... There's no better way to see the city than by biking through it. A blacktop path stretches for about 20 prime lakefront miles, from **7100 south to 5700 north,** taking in spectacular views of the lake, museums, parks, harbors, and the skyline. Considering the views, it's no surprise that the path is often crowded with walkers, rollerbladers, joggers, parents with baby carriages, dog walkers, and others. If possible, bike on weekdays; weekends can be very competitive, as bikers and 'bladers sometimes try to run each other off the path. ***A word of warning:*** From McCormick Place on north, the path is pretty safe, and riding alone during daylight hours poses no real threat. But much of the path south of McCormick Place runs through areas where few people congregate, and despite city-run bike patrols along the entire length of the path, muggings have been known to happen. One easy way to avoid trouble is the most obvious: Don't ride alone. Another great bike path is the 7-mile **Evanston–Lake Shore trail,** along Sheridan Road in nearby north-suburban Evanston, from

about Main Street north to the Evanston-Wilmette border. It's about a half-hour drive from the Loop to the starting point; you can also take the Evanston Express el, or ride your bike up there. The route more or less traces the lakeshore, passing Northwestern University; the northern end of the trail follows on pedestrian sidewalks. For more information on these and other bike trails in the metropolitan area, call the **Chicagoland Bicycle Federation** (Tel 312/42-PEDAL; www.biketraffic.org). For a detailed map of the lakefront path, call the **Chicago Park District** office at 312/742-PLAY. Public bike rental is available along the lakefront at Oak Street Beach, Lincoln Park Zoo, at Cannon Drive, and at Buckingham Fountain (rates average about $10/hour). In addition, several stores rent bicycles by the hour and day.

Out on a swim... With the lake at your doorstep, or at least steps away from where you're probably staying, there's no real reason to swim in a pool (unless your hotel has a particularly fine one, such as the beautiful pool at the **Four Seasons Hotel** or the **Hotel Inter-Continental Chicago**'s 13th-floor Italianate junior Olympic–size pool—see the Accommodations chapter). But if you must, the Chicago Park District (Tel 312/742-PLAY) operates dozens of outdoor neighborhood swimming pools, two dozen indoor pools, and a couple of swimming lagoons. Just beware—kids swim in all of these, and you know what that means.

Par for the course... Tiger Woods wannabes from throughout the city head for the **Diversey Driving Range** (Tel 312/742-7929; 141 W. Diversey Pkwy.) to perfect their swings. Tucked in Lincoln Park, just north of the harbor on Diversey Avenue, the two-level range is big enough to handle the hoards that head over here on sunny Saturdays (you're pretty much guaranteed not to wait on weekdays before 5pm). The low-key attitude and affordable prices ($11 for a bucket of 50 balls) attract everyone from nervous beginners to show-off power hitters. When you're ready to hit the fairways, the **Sydney Marovitz Course** (3600 N. Lake Shore Dr.), which many Chicagoans still call Waveland, is a pretty nine-holer right on the lake, convenient for visitors; there's also an 18-hole course in **Jackson Park** (63rd and Stoney Island Ave.), as well as a municipal

driving range, and a 35-tee range in **Lincoln Park** (Lake Shore Dr. at Diversey Pkwy.). All city-run courses are open mid-April through November, dawn to dusk; for information on greens fees, location, and hours, call the **Chicago Park District** office (Tel 312/742-PLAY; automated phone reservation system at 312/245-0909).

The tennis racket... Right in the dreamy shadows of the city's skyline, there are hundreds of courts to choose from, several of them lighted for night play. City courts are open mid-April through November; some charge fees and take reservations—reserve if you can, since facilities tend to get very crowded on weekends and in the after-work hours. Two convenient locations with lighted courts are **Daley Bicentennial Plaza** in Grant Park (Tel 312/742-7648; Randolph St. and Lake Shore Dr.; $7 an hour, reservations accepted) and **Waveland** (Addison St. and Lake Shore Dr., $5 per person daily pass guarantees you 1 hour on courts, on a first-come-first-served basis).

Rollerblade runner... Stores renting in-line skates have sprung up all over the city, especially along the streets within a block or two or three of the lake, where throngs of rollerbladers cheerfully mow down runners, strollers, bikers, and dogs. The lakeshore path all the way from Shedd Aquarium north to Hollywood Beach is fantastic for skating; of course, as always along the lake, the farther north you go the less crowded it will be. Try **Londo Mondo** (with two locations: Tel 312/751-2794, 1100 N. Dearborn St.; and Tel 773/327-2218, 2148 N. Halsted St.; $7/hour, $20/day) or **Windward Sports** (Tel 773/472-6868; 3317 N. Clark St.; $15/day Mon–Fri, $20/day Sat–Sun). **Bike and Roll** runs outdoor skate-rental booths during the summer at North Avenue Beach (North Ave. and Lake Shore Dr.) and Navy Pier ($8.75/hour, $34/day).

What's nice on ice... One good thing about the brutal winters here is that you can ice-skate outdoors—the city maintains more than 100 outdoor ice-skating rinks (call the Park District at 312/742-PLAY for locations). If scenic vistas are to your liking, the rink at **Millennium Park** (Tel 312/742-5222; Randolph St. at Michigan Ave.) has gorgeous views of the downtown skyline. It's open December through March, assuming the weather is cold and blustery

enough. Admission is free if you bring your own skates; there's also skate rental ($5) and a warming shelter. For year-round skating, damn the weather, try the practical indoor rink at the **McFetridge Sports Center** (Tel 312/478-2609; 3843 N. California Ave.; $3 adults, $2.25 children under 12, $2.50 skate rental). Open hours vary depending on the day and season, so call ahead.

Run for your life... In Chicago, figuring out where to run is dead easy. Something about the sight of Chicago's lakeshore paths makes even nonrunners yearn to lace up their Nikes and sprint away. The stretch from Oak Street north to Foster is superb, and therefore very crowded on weekends; go early, late, or on weekdays. Most of the path is blacktop, but there's a separate gravel running path for about a mile from Belmont to Irving Park. If you want to run in a group, call the **Chicago Area Runners Association** (Tel 312/666-9836; www.cararuns.org), which has many different meeting spots. **Frontrunners/walkers** (Tel 312/409-2790; www.frfwchicago.org), the gay and lesbian running group, meets every Tuesday at 6:30pm and Saturday at 9am at the totem pole at Addison Street and Lake Shore Drive. Both organizations, predictably, run along the lake. Where else? For serious runners, there's the **Chicago Marathon** every October (Tel 312/904-9800 or 888/243-3344 for registration and information).

The wind's beneath my wings... Windsurfing on Lake Michigan is cool beyond belief, but also dangerous if you don't know what you're doing. **Windward Sports** (Tel 773/472-6868; 3317 N. Clark St.) offers private windsurfing lessons ($50/hour; call at least a week in advance to reserve; reservations are required) on weekends from late April through August.

You sleigh me!... Romantic, fun, jolly, toasty: These are a few words that could describe the winter sleigh rides offered at **Forest View Farm** (Tel 708/560-0306; ½-mile west of Cicero Ave. on 167th St.) in suburban Tinley Park. Park your carcass on the velvet seats under a warm blanket, and let the horses pull you and your love in an antique carriage into another world; or pile the whole family in the sleigh and raise a rowdy chorus of "Over the River and

Through the Woods." (The sleigh drivers must have heard it a gazillion times.) The rides, which cost $7 per person, last about 30 wonderful minutes; reservations (and snow) required.

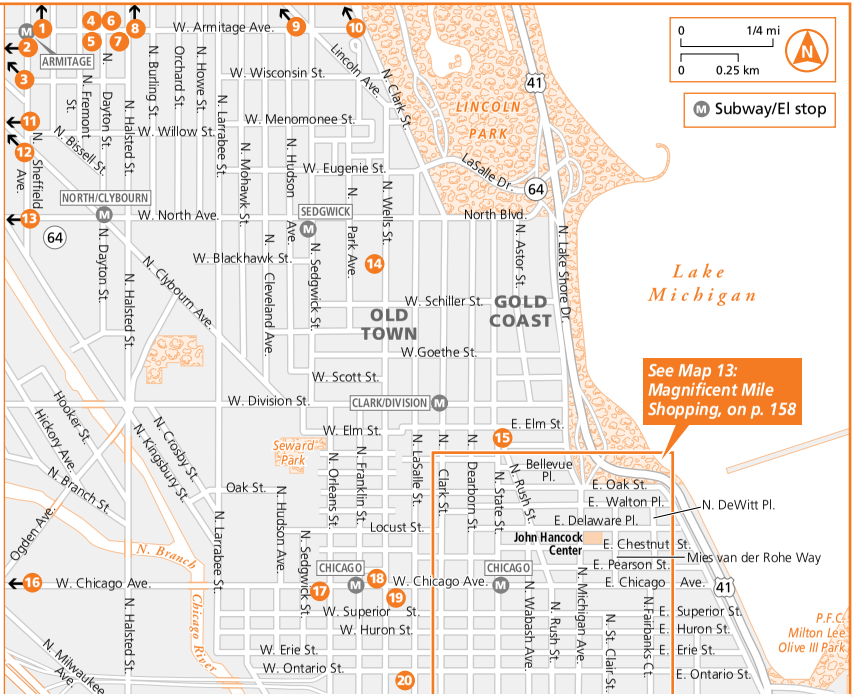
Read all about it... *Windy City Sports,* a free monthly magazine, has up-to-date info on local sporting events, fun runs, and other outdoorsy pursuits. Copies are available at most sporting-goods stores (such as the massive downtown **Sportmart;** Tel 312/337-6151; 620 N. LaSalle St.), health clubs, and bookstores; you can also call the magazine's offices to find the nearest location (Tel 312/421-1551; www.windycitysports.com).

SHOP

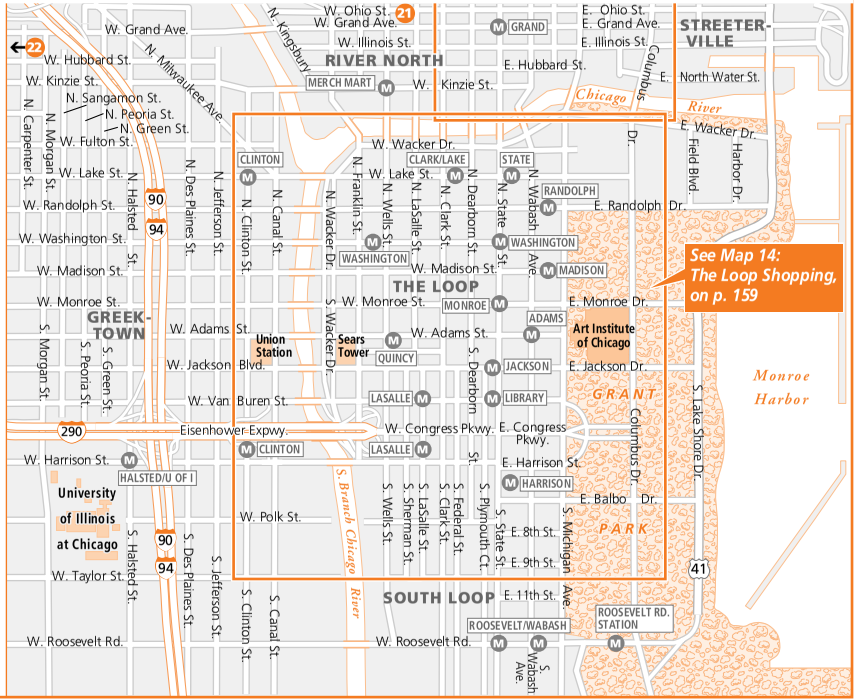
PING

5

Abraham Lincoln Bookstore **17**
The Alley **10**
All Our Children **8**
Alternatives **7**
Apartment Number 9 **11**
Barnes & Noble **10, 15**
Bittersweet **1**
Blake **9**
Bookworks **10**
Chicago Comics **10**
Crate & Barrel Outlet Store **12**
Disgraceland **10**
Embelezar **13**
Fudge Pot **14**
Ginkgo Tree Book Shop **16**
Jayson Home & Garden **12**
Krivoy **3**
Lori's Discount Designer Shoes **6**
Manifesto **19**
McShane's Exchange **7**
Multiple Choices **4**
p.45 **13**
Pagoda Red **13**
Paper Source **18**
Powell's **9**
Reckless Records **3, 10**
Saffron **3**
Salvage One **22**
Sawbridge Studios **21**



2nd Hand Tunes **10**
Sportmart **20**
Stitch **13**
Strange Cargo **10**
Tabula Tua **2**
Tangerine **13**
Uncle Fun **10**
Unique Presence **5**
Windward Sports **10**
Women and Children First **10**



Basic Stuff

In Chicago, shopping is as much a pastime as voting twice, walking through the giant heart at the Museum of Science and Industry, lounging by the lakefront, or sitting in the bleachers at Wrigley Field to watch the Cubs lose another game. As the hub of the Midwest, Chicago draws millions of people to its shores, many of whom visit to do nothing but spend, spend, spend. Even jaded jet-setters from L.A., Paris, and Rome will find the experience of shopping in Chicago entirely satisfying, since all the big luxury names are here, all conveniently located in one downtown stretch. Service here is generally peppy, too. The New York assumption that people like to be abused by snotty sales help just doesn't exist in Chicago.

Target Zones

Michigan Avenue, from Oak Street on its northern tip, down to the Chicago River, is hands-down the most important shopping street in the city, justly known as the **Magnificent Mile.** Once a sleepy thoroughfare lined with elegant five-story limestone buildings, it has in the past few decades become a marble canyon of sky-high towers, home to the fanciest of the fancy shops, such as Chanel and Cartier, as well as suburban mall standbys like Victoria's Secret. It is home, as well, to all the best department stores—**Marshall Field's, Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale's,** and **Nordstrom**—along with some bargain-hunting meccas (**Filene's Basement** offers designer duds at deep discounts, and Swedish clothing company **H&M** stocks trendy styles at impressively low prices). Around the corner from Michigan Avenue, however, is **Oak Street,** Chicago's own Madison Avenue, Ginza, and Rodeo Drive all rolled up into one. Only one block long, it houses designer boutiques (usually in beautiful brownstone settings), including Prada, and Hermès, not to mention Barneys New York. You'll find a lot of the funkier boutiques, from vintage to fashion forward, as well as the hippest record stores, in **Lake View, Lincoln Park,** and **Wicker Park/Bucktown.** The main strolling streets there include Broadway and Clark Street in Lincoln Park, Halsted Street in Lake View, and Milwaukee Avenue and Damen Avenue in Wicker Park/Bucktown. **State Street** used to be Chicago's "great street," then it fell into disrepair for about 50 years (really) but now it's back. It's clean, and it's home to **Marshall Field's** flagship store (a must-see), but

otherwise there's nothing too distinctive (unless you really love **Sears** and the affordable but teen-oriented fashions at **Old Navy**). Still, the street bustles during the week—just like a great street should.

Vertical Malls

For better or for worse, Chicago has perfected the urban shopping mall. Michigan Avenue is lined with huge, generally pretentious marble monuments to the almighty dollar, ugly on the outside and, well, pretty ugly on the inside, too. But Chicago's towering malls at least are filled with scores of stores and restaurants that provide for a lot of good shopping—and great people-watching. Built in 1976, **Water Tower Place** (Tel 312/440-3165; 835 N. Michigan Ave. at Pearson St.) is the most popular—especially with hoards of suburban teenagers. **Marshall Field's** and Lord & Taylor are the ground-floor anchors, and The Ritz-Carlton is perched on top. Walk into its impressive marble-walled, marble-floored lobby, go up the escalator past waterfalls and lush foliage to the mezzanine, and just wander. The mall has about 100 stores, most of them no different than you'd find in your local mall at home. The best reason to stop by is the unique food court, called foodlife. Across the street, **Bloomingdale's** anchors the atrium at the **900 North Michigan Shops** (Tel 312/915-3916), a way upscale mall with Gucci, Lalique, Max Mara, and about 80 other stores, as well as direct access to the Four Seasons Hotel. **Bloomingdale's** doesn't quite have the same cachet here as it does in New York (its hidden-from-the-street location doesn't help), but it attracts plenty of free-spending young socialites (and has excellent shoe sales). When the 900 N. Michigan mall first opened, it took a lot of guff for being too upscale and too controlling. For instance, the way the escalators were positioned forced shoppers to walk for what seemed like miles, passing store after store after store, to catch the next one going down. People balked (and didn't spend money), so eventually the owners of the mall installed more escalators, making it more user-friendly. ***One warning:*** If you suffer from vertigo, don't look down from the mall's walkways—it's a treacherous view. There is, however, a particularly good view of Michigan Avenue and beyond from the huge round window on the eastern side. Although eight-story **Chicago Place** (Tel 312/642-4811; 700 N. Michigan Ave.) has a few good stores—such as **Umbria Ceramics** for Italian pottery—the place is sort of a low-energy bore; but don't

miss the ground-floor cosmetics sales area at **Saks Fifth Avenue,** filled with hard-to-find luxury brands and funkier, younger beauty lines. The food court here, while not as creative as the one at Water Tower Place, has wonderful views and a peaceful vibe, making it a good affordable lunch stop.

Another washout is the **Shops at the Mart** at the **Merchandise Mart** (Tel 312/527-4141; 450 N. Wells St.), which is crowded with secretaries, furniture and fabric reps, designers, and office workers during the week (mostly eating lunch in the greasy-smelling food court), but eerily empty on weekends. No wonder, either, since its selection of chain stores can all be found elsewhere. The Mart itself is a gargantuan and wonderful building, but most of it—in fact, the interesting parts—are off-limits to the hoi polloi unless they have card-carrying interior designers leading the way.

A few blocks south, right before you get to the Chicago River, you'll find **Westfield North Bridge** (Tel 312/327-2300; 520 N. Michigan Ave.), where the main attraction is the department store **Nordstrom.** The only distinctive thing about this mall is the third floor, entirely devoted to children's stores. Chicago Harley Davidson stocks mini T-shirts for future Easy Riders, the Sanrio store is stuffed with Hello Kitty and other pink-and-powder-blue cartoon characters, and the LEGO store has a replica of the Chicago skyline (there's even a play area out front where kids can build their own creations).

Money Matters

Chicago's merchants know they don't live by locals alone, so they are generally as accommodating as possible to out-of-towners. All the major department stores will hold merchandise for a reasonable amount of time and will ship your purchases home to you. Writing personal checks is an iffier proposition—and at some stores, especially department stores, it takes forever. But ask, and as long as you've got a driver's license or some other form of photo ID, most stores will accept your check. Haggling over prices in retail stores is pretty much frowned upon—after all, this isn't the Old Country. But, you've got nothing to lose by trying to get a better price at the various secondhand stores around town. Stores are not required to give refunds if you're not satisfied with your purchase—most will, however, though some will offer it only in the form of exchange or credit and some will only allow you to return within a specific amount of time.

Lunch on the Mag Mile

When I worked just off Michigan Avenue, my favorite spot for lunch was the Food Court on the eighth floor of Chicago Place. A bright, airy space with a fountain and palm trees, it's my pick for the best cheap eats in the area. You'll find the usual mall favorites (Subway, Taco Bell, Wendy's), but healthier dishes are available at Pattie's Quick and Lite (salads, wraps, pasta) and Pita Pavilion (Mediterranean). My true downfall, though, were always the crispy french fries at the Great Steak and Potato Company. Grab one of the tables behind Pita Pavilion for a great Michigan Avenue view.

Hours of Business

Most stores, from small boutiques to large department stores, open around 10am and remain open until at least 6pm. On Thursdays, stores generally stay open until 8 or 9pm. Many bookstores stay open much later, some until 11pm. Many of the owners of vintage stores like to sleep in; hence, those stores often don't open until 11am, or even noon in some cases. Virtually all stores are open on Sunday.

Sales Tax

A state and county sales tax of 8.75 percent is added to every purchase in Chicago, except groceries and prescription drugs. Tax is waived, however, if you have goods shipped out of state, so have your expensive purchases sent home if you want to save a bundle.

The Lowdown

Landmarks... There are a few stores here whose names are instantly linked with Chicago. Of course, the main event is **Marshall Field's** department store—if nothing else here, you should buy a box of the store's famous Frango Mints, a consummately Chicago ritual practiced by natives as well as visitors. One hint, though: Stick to the original flavor, no matter how exotic the lemon, raspberry, and others sound. The offerings at **Carson Pirie Scott & Co.** are nothing special, but the department store's flagship building itself is a don't-miss classic Louis Sullivan extravaganza. Make sure you see its main entrance on the northwest corner. A selection of pipes and other smoking accoutrements is sold in the Loop at **Iwan Ries & Co.,** as they have been since 1857—the second-story Pipe Museum is a hoot. The

Chicago ArchiCenter Shop, in the Loop, has beautiful posters and photos, books, and, yes, even mugs, that will keep the city's skyline and history alive for you after you've returned home. **Carl Fischer of Chicago,** a huge, dusty, musty place in the shadow of the el in the Loop, has one of the best selections of sheet music in the country. **Crate & Barrel,** a quintessential Chicago success story, is responsible for more interiors than perhaps any other store in the city. Though it may connote middle-brow, mass taste elsewhere, Chicagoans still remember when it was just a funky little store in Old Town.

For pampered service... Stick to the Mag Mile/Oak Street nexus and you could hit all these shops in one extremely spoiled day. (Don't laugh—it's been done.) Standing in the handsome dressing rooms of **Barneys New York** while a tailor pins your hem and the sales staff hurl flattering remarks your way can really help the ego, not to mention how the chic clothing (for both sexes) can help your fashion image. The chic salespeople at **Hermès** will spend a surprising amount of time doting on you as well, even demonstrating how to tie one of their horsey-patterned silk scarves in that insouciant way French women seem to have perfected. Spend a few hours poring over the fancy cosmetics and perfumes at **Marilyn Miglin**—while you may not necessarily depart better-looking than when you entered, the staff is so fawning you'll definitely feel better. The well-dressed staff at the Ultimo boutique, for men's and women's clothes, is more accommodating than its snooty reputation allows. Buy something and you'll be their friend forever.

Accessorize... Quirky hats, funny slippers that make you look like a genie, sexy dresses and blouses, and unique handcrafted jewelry are beautifully displayed at **Krivoy** in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. Whether it's a nighttime clutch or a major handbag in which you can schlep everything but the kitchen sink, you're sure to find it at **Bottega Veneta,** the famous Italian leathergoods shop known for its woven butter-soft leather (and high prices). **Glove Me Tender** may be small in square footage, but then, gloves and mittens don't take up much room; the store carries thousands of pairs. And when a button pops, please don't

buy one of those little plastic things at the drugstore—instead head to **Tender Buttons,** a teeny-tiny store with an enormous selection of buttons: new ones, old ones, square ones, round ones, wood, Bakelite, brass, mother-of-pearl, you name it.

Shopping scenes... Don't be surprised on a Saturday morning if housewares-and-furniture mecca **Crate & Barrel** is jammed with preppie-looking couples running around wielding clipboards and wedding registry forms. Things can get pretty hairy on Saturday at **Filene's Basement,** too, with bargain-hunters free from weekday lunch-hour constraints battling over some of the best clothing bargains in town. It's a far more civilized scene at **Salvage One,** where do-it-yourselfers with "This Old House" complexes trek to shuffle through five vast floors, discussing the relative merits of this vintage toilet versus that one, these mahogany doors versus those doors in oak, etc., etc.

For foot fetishists... For the most glamorous shoes in town, head to **Stuart Weitzman's** Michigan Avenue shop, filled with colorful, high-heeled, extravagantly priced creations (the window displays are miniature works of art). Almost as pricey but slightly more practical are the shoes at **Donald J. Pliner.** At **Tod's,** you can try on sexy little Italian lemon yellow or candy apple green leather shoes, but do the sensible thing and buy the signature brown driving shoes. After browsing

Auction action

Forget the stereotype. Sales at Chicago's best-known local auction house, Leslie Hindman, rarely involve multi-million-dollar bids for an Impressionist sunflower painting. In fact, many items sell for hundreds rather than thousands of dollars, which is less than you'd pay for them in a store. The auction house (Tel 312/280-1212; 122 N. Aberdeen St.) specializes in antique furniture, decorative art, books, and other collectibles—you never know what will be for sale, which is part of the fun (at a recent sports memorabilia auction, pieces of the original Detroit Tiger stadium scoreboard sold for $1,770). Admission is free, and exhibitions are held for three to four days before the actual auction. Don't worry—unless you arrange beforehand, no sneeze or mop of the brow will be misconstrued as a bid. ***Novice buyers should beware:*** *A 20% "buyer's premium" is added to each purchase (in addition to sales tax). Hey, the lady's got to make money somehow.*

at those high-priced boutiques, the beautifully crafted shoes at **Cole-Haan** look like a relative bargain. If you've got designer tastes but a limited budget, **Lori's Discount Designer Shoes,** in Lincoln Park, peddles a wide, quickly changing array of bargain-priced designer shoes for women (20%–40% off Kenneth Cole, Calvin, Joan & David, etc.). In-the-know customers arrive early in the day for the best selection. And if you like your shoes edgy (and preferably black), **Alternatives,** with locations on Rush Street and near Armitage Avenue, stocks footwear with a distinctly urban edge.

For men with Cary Grant complexes... First, step into the gracious portal of the **Giorgio Armani** boutique for a formal black overcoat. At **Ermenegildo Zegna** you'll find the most gorgeous (that's the only word that springs to mind) and expensive menswear this side of Milan. Then add a little James Bondish élan to your look with a gadget from **Hammacher Schlemmer,** which specializes in high-tech, and often wacky, wizardry. No self-respecting Cary Grant wannabe would appear without a pipe from **Iwan Ries & Co.,** a Loop shop with more than 25,000 pipes in stock, from wood to Meerschaum and everything in between.

For men who would rather resemble Lou Reed... **The Alley** sells the kind of clothes that work well on the wild side, whether that means an all-nighter at the clubs, a gig with an alternative garage band, or just a few hours lolling around some see-and-be-seen outdoor cafe, leaning on your Harley. For a downtown attitude without the grunge, try Bucktown's **Apartment Number 9,** which stocks cool shirts and jeans with designer labels (Paul Smith, Marc Jacobs, etc.).

Shopping bags to show off... With a distinctive robin's-egg blue bag in your hand, everyone will know you just splurged on something from **Tiffany & Co.** The shiny black bags with white lettering from **Chanel** are also a good choice, since black goes with everything. The discreet, earth-toned bags from the **Giorgio Armani** boutique imply not only lots of money, but lots of taste. If folks spy you walking down the street swinging a **Plaza Escada** bag, they

may question your taste, but at least they'll know you've spent a lot of money. The **Ermenegildo Zegna** boutique for men may bankrupt you if you're not careful. At least, if that happens, you'll be a very, very fancy bag lady (or man).

Fashion forward... Chicago may not be known as the home of waif-thin models and ascot-wearing designers, but high fashion is alive and well here. **Blake,** in Lincoln Park, sells women's clothes by such on-the-edge designers as Dries van Noten, among others. The city's power elite shop is **Ultimo,** where several men's and women's designers meet in a multilevel store. A former Ultimo saleswoman opened her own boutique, **Ikram,** a few blocks away, featuring a similarly high-powered designer roster. **Neiman Marcus**—that temple of conspicuous consumption—usually carries the designers featured in the current issue of *Vogue*. If you're interested in making a splash, but not the same splash as everyone else, it's not hard to find the unusual and sometimes one-of-a-kind at Lincoln Park's **Krivoy,** which is filled with the owners' designs for women. The younger hip crowd shops at **Sugar Magnolia,** where you won't find weird hard-to-wear designs by Japanese designers or Belgians with hard-to-pronounce names, but sporty stuff by up-and-coming, mostly American, designers. If you want to find out which new designers will be huge a few years from now, head to **p.45,** widely acknowledged as Bucktown's most cutting-edge fashion boutique (in a neighborhood filled with trend-setting shops, that's no small achievement). Go to **H&M** for affordable knock-offs of the season's coolest looks—but be forewarned that lots of the clothes here are cut super-slim.

Key notes... Yeah, it's part of a chain, but the **Virgin Megastore** on Michigan Avenue is convenient, lively, and stocked with more music than anywhere else in town. Nearby, the far more specialized **Jazz Record Mart** not only sells CDs, tapes, and regular albums, but also has old, hard-to-find 45s and even 78s. **2nd Hand Tunes,** on the north side, is rife with collectors, from Judy, Barbra, and Bette fanatics to those seeking rare recordings by the not-forgotten Clash, Adam Ant, Blondie, and, well, you get the picture. **Reckless Records** is all edgy attitude: loud music, tattoo-sporting customers, and posters of bands you've

never heard of—all proof that the spirit of independent rock 'n' roll lives on.

Kid stuff, part one... Looking for a quiet kiddie break downtown? Stop by **Children in Paradise** bookshop, which offers storytime on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings (along with lots of books and toys to browse through). The gag gifts and weird collectibles at **Uncle Fun** appeal to the kid in all of us—it's just the place to pick up that rubber chicken you've been looking for.

Kid stuff, part two... If you're looking for clothes that dress up your kids without making them look like baby fashion victims, head to **All Our Children,** which sells a sophisticated yet charming collection in sizes infant through 7. **Oilily** carries its own line of bright, adorable kids clothes, with a hefty tariff to match. **Madison & Friends** is filled with stylish but practical kids' clothing: everything from baby yoga ensembles to preteen jeans.

Book nooks... Chicago is well-stocked with major bookstore chains—notably your **Barnes & Noble** and **Borders** megastores—but if your reading needs are a bit more esoteric, try these specialty shops. On Wabash Avenue in the South Loop, the **Prairie Avenue Bookshop** specializes in books on architecture, design, and engineering, while the **Ginkgo Tree Book Shop** in suburban Oak Park sells books about that town's most famous past resident (not counting Ernest Hemingway), Frank Lloyd Wright. Like the name says, the **Abraham Lincoln Bookstore,** in River North, is devoted to books about Honest Abe and his life and times. At Andersonville's **Women and Children First** you'll find books on women's issues, as well as a good selection of children's books. If you prefer your reading materials with lots of pictures, then check out **Chicago Comics** on Clark Street in Wrigleyville. Its extensive collection of comics even includes work by local artists looking to make a name for themselves.

Used but not abused books... The Lincoln Park and Lake View neighborhoods are target zones for secondhand book stores: You'll find thousands of high-quality used hardcover and paperback books at **Powell's** and **Bookworks.** Even better, don't miss the wide selection of contemporary first editions sold at each.

For decorating divas... Given its important role in both the history of design and furniture manufacturing, Chicago is a good place to shop for furniture, even if you're just visiting. The light-filled Michigan Avenue **Crate & Barrel** is filled with four-poster beds, big squishy floral-print sofas, club chairs, and all sorts of traditional furniture that, judging from the hordes roaming through the store, seems to appeal to everyone on earth, not just Chicagoans. There are no mass-produced dining room tables, chairs, or sleigh beds at River North's **Sawbridge Studios,** where everything is handcrafted by individual artisans across the country. **Manifesto,** the city's prime source for architecturally inspired furniture, is full of the kinds of pieces that show up in design magazines (with not-so-minimalist prices to match).

Furnishing touches... The best concentration of home-accessory shops is along Armitage Avenue west of Halsted Street. Not to be missed are **Tabula Tua,** where the colorful dishes and serving pieces will inspire you to invite 20 of your closest friends over for dinner; **A Unique Presence,** filled with one-of-a-kind decorative pieces by North American artists; and **Multiple Choices,** with an eclectic mix of home accents and creative gifts. Stroll along Armitage and you'll find even more shops worth browsing through. Elsewhere in the city, **Elements** on Oak Street is filled with expensive cutting-edge designs, including artist-made lamps, picture frames, and some of the most creatively mixed-and-matched tableware in the city. For a casual but more rustic look, try **Jayson Home & Garden**, which will make you want to go home and plant bulbs. Both the Michigan Avenue **Crate & Barrel** and the **Crate & Barrel Outlet Store** up in Lincoln Park are filled with streamlined, contemporary-styled houseswares, including dishes, glasses, bowls, picture frames, pots and pans, and practical objects such as salad spinners and apple corers. Beautiful stationery and paper, mostly imported or handmade, is available at the **Paper Source,** where you'll no doubt spend more than you intended.

The sporting life... **Nike Town** sells almost everything the company sells—a cornucopia of footwear and sports clothing. Only tourists actually buy here—the prices tend to be higher than at other city shops. There will be some things you can't get at Nike Town, but don't despair. The best all-round

sports store is **Sportmart,** a multilevel mecca for all things athletic (don't miss the "Wall of Fame" outside, with handprints of well-known athletes). If you're anxious to get moving outside, there's always **Windward Sports,** in Lake View, which specializes in whatever you may need to cut quickly through the elements (i.e., skis, windsurfers, surfboards, snowboards, rollerblades...).

The vintage vantage point... As you'd expect, funky Lake View is the neighborhood for equally funky vintage clothing stores. A recent addition to the used clothing scene, **Disgraceland** has a definite 1960s bent, selling kitschy vintage bell-bottoms, chiffon beaded numbers, sandals, and lots of other stuff. It's all very Ann-Margret. The 1960s are also alive just up the street at **Strange Cargo,** the place to come for vintage clothes à la Brady Bunch and campy lunch boxes from the Sixties and Seventies (Starsky and Hutch, Bobby Sherman, the Partridge family).

Damen Avenue—the other Michigan Avenue... Okay, so there's Michigan Avenue and its behemoth department stores, and Oak Street lined with brand-name designer shops. But for those who already have self-esteem, head to Damen Avenue in Bucktown. Over the last several years, a host of great yet small clothing, accessories, and furniture boutiques have opened, and now you can just go from one to the next, screwing up your credit by buying, buying, buying—but safe in the knowledge that what you're buying won't be worn (or used) by every other person in town. Walking north from North Avenue to Armitage Avenue, stop in **Embelezar, p.45, Tangerine, Pagoda Red, Stitch,** and **Saffron.** Along the way, take an espresso-and-bruschetta break at **Caffe de Luca** (Tel 773/342-6000; 1721 N. Damen St.).

Why go to New York?... For brightly colored Italian driving shoes and other butter-soft leather goods, try **Tod's,** on Oak Street, while down the block **Barneys New York** offers drop-dead gorgeous men's and women's clothes (at drop-dead high prices). The completely fabulous **Giorgio Armani** boutique, in the equally fabulous Park Hyatt Hotel, and the **Chanel** boutique, both on Michigan Avenue, are the best, while **Hammacher Schlemmer** is a gadget guru's dream-come-true. Chicago also has a **Saks Fifth Avenue.**

Labels for less... You could shop at full-price retail establishments like Barneys New York, but if you search hard enough you'll find some of their private-label goods, as well as clothes by designers from Calvin Klein to Anne Klein, steeply discounted at **Filene's Basement.** Those same designers, as well as many others, are also represented at **Lori's Discount Designer Shoes,** a self-serve shoe store in Lincoln Park. A "consignment shop" may be just a fancier way of advertising used clothing, but **The Daisy Shop** is not your standard vintage store. The clothes sold here once hung in some of the most stylish closets in town; you'll find designer suits and gowns in impeccable condition, at prices that are far lower than they would be new (but it's still not exactly bargain bin). You'll find some Gap and Banana Republic labels among the Prada and Versace at **McShane's Exchange,** a consignment shop on Armitage Avenue that keeps discounting prices the longer an outfit remains in stock (which can mean some seriously good deals). No outfit would be complete without a great pair of trendy shades from Ray Ban, Vuarnet, or some other brand name, which can be found at a discount at **Sun King.**

When you need a sugar fix... Judy Contino is considered one of the best bakers in town, and **Bittersweet** is the place to sample her delicious pastries, tarts, and cakes. Sandwiches, soups, and salads are available at lunchtime, but let's be honest—the reason to come here is because of the dessert. For a more concentrated sugar rush, head for the **Fudge Pot,** in Old Town, where the yummiest fudge around comes in many flavors. For a gourmet experience, **Vosges Haut-Chocolat** takes chocolate to the next level; the store, which looks like a futuristic art gallery, sells chocolate truffles with international flavor accents (saffron, cardamom, and green tea, to name just a few). You can also sit at the bar and sip a decadently rich "couture cocoa."

Help for wanderlust... Even a happy Chicagoan needs to get away from it all every now and again. Who better to consult for travel advice than the **Savvy Traveler?** Located on South Michigan Avenue, you can stop in and grab some maps, guides, and gear before jumping on the entryway of Route 66 at Grant Park.

Map 13: Magnificent Mile Shopping

Abraham Lincoln Bookstore **15**
Alternatives **5**
Barneys New York **6**
Bloomingdale's **9**
Borders **12**
Bottega Veneta **14**
Chanel **4**
Children in Paradise **8**
Cole-Haan **20**
Crate & Barrel **21**
The Daisy Shop **7**
Donald J. Pliner **3**
Elements **3**
Ermenegildo Zegna **22**
Filene's Basement **12**
Giorgio Armani **14**
Glove Me Tender **9**
H&M **12**
Hammacher Schlemmer **27**
Hermès **2**
Ikram **10**
Jazz Record Mart **26**
Madison & Friends **5**
Marilyn Miglin **2**
Neiman Marcus **17**
Nike Town **19**
Nordstrom **24**
Oilily **25**
Plaza Escada **11**
Saks Fifth Avenue **18**
Stuart Weitzman **9**
Sugar Magnolia **1**
Sun King **13**
Tender Buttons **5**
Tiffany & Co. **16**
Tod's **7**
Ultimo **7**
Umbria Ceramics **18**
Virgin Megastore **23**
Vosges Haut-Chocolat **25**

Map 14: The Loop Shopping

Borders **1**
Carl Fischer of Chicago **9**
Carson Pirie Scott & Co **6**
Chicago ArchiCenter Shop **8**
Filene's Basement **5**
Iwan Ries & Co **7**
Marshall Field's **2**
Old Navy **3**
Prairie Avenue Bookshop **11**
Savvy Traveler **10**
Sears **4**

The Index

Abraham Lincoln Bookstore (p. 154) RIVER NORTH Books and paraphernalia relating to the U.S.'s 16th president and the Civil War.... *Tel 312/944-3085. www.alincolnbookshop.com. 357 W. Chicago Ave., at Orleans St. Chicago el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.
See Map 13 on p. 158.

The Alley (p. 152) LAKE VIEW Motorcycle jackets and all the leather outfits you could ever desire, plus Dead Head paraphernalia, edgy jewelry, and lots and lots of big black shoes.... *Tel 773/883-1800. www.thealley.com. 3228 N. Clark St., at Belmont Ave. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

All Our Children (p. 154) LINCOLN PARK Where the fashion-forward baby gets garbed.... *Tel 773/327-1868. 2217 N. Halsted St, at Webster Ave. Fullerton el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Alternatives (p. 152) MAGNIFICENT MILE/OLD TOWN When you really need just one more pair of black shoes.... Magnificent Mile: *Tel 312/266-1545; 942 N. Rush St., at Walton Place; Chicago/State el stop (Red Line). Old Town: Tel 312/943-1591; 1969 N. Halsted St., at Armitage Ave.; Armitage el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.
See Map 13 on p. 158.

Apartment Number 9 (p. 152) BUCKTOWN Slick, urban clothes for the well-dressed man with an unlimited budget.... *Tel 773/395-2999. 1804 N. Damen Ave., at Willow St. Damen el stop (Blue Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Barnes & Noble (p. 154) CITYWIDE Book megastore that sells almost everything at a 10% to 30% discount.... *Gold Coast branch: Tel 312/280-8155; www.barnesandnoble.com; 1130 N. State St., at Cedar St.; Clark/Division el stop (Red Line). Lake View branch: Tel 773/871-9004; 659 W. Diversey Pkwy., at Clark St.; Diversey el stop (Brown Line). Call for other locations.*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Barneys New York (p. 150) MAGNIFICENT MILE If you're into Donna, Calvin, Giorgio, and the rest of that ilk, this department store is the place for you. Friendlier staff than you'd expect, too.... *Tel 312/587-1700. www.barneys.com. 25 E. Oak St., at Rush St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Bittersweet (p. 157) LAKE VIEW Satisfy your sweet tooth with a fresh-baked pastry, fruit tart, or the amazing chocolate cake.... *Tel 773/929-1100. 1114 W. Belmont Ave., at Sheffield Ave. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Blake (p. 153) LINCOLN PARK This small, discriminating women's boutique sells choice selections of white-hot trendy clothing.... *Tel 773/477-3364. 2448 N. Lincoln Ave., at Montana St. Fullerton el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Bloomingdale's (p. 146) MAGNIFICENT MILE This six-story version of the famed Manhattan emporium sells trendy clothes, great housewares, and gallons of cosmetics.... *Tel 312/440-4460. www.bloomingdales.com. 900 N. Michigan Ave., at Delaware Place. Chicago el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Bookworks (p. 154) LAKE VIEW An anomaly among used bookstores: This place has a great selection that's organized and not dusty.... *Tel 773/871-5318. www.thebookworks.com/index.htm. 3444 N. Clark St., at Newport Ave. Addison el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Borders (p. 154) MAGNIFICENT MILE/LOOP This three-story megabookstore across the street from the Water Tower Place shopping mall is always bustling.... *Magnificent Mile: Tel 312/573-0564; www.borders.com; 830 N. Michigan Ave., at Pearson St.; Chicago el stop (Red Line). Loop: Tel 312/606-0750; 150 N. State St., at Randolph St.; Washington el stop (Red Line) or Randolph el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.
See Map 14 on p. 159.

Bottega Veneta (p. 150) MAGNIFICENT MILE Purses, briefcases, shoes, and other pricey Italian woven leather goods.... *Tel 312/664-3220. www.bottegaveneta.com. 800 N. Michigan Ave., at Chicago Ave. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Carl Fischer of Chicago (p. 150) THE LOOP At this famous source for sheet music, you'll browse through the stacks with Chicago Symphony Orchestra musicians and the students who hope to become future symphony stars.... *Tel 312/427-6652. 333 S. State St., at Jackson Ave. Jackson el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 14 on p. 159.

Carson Pirie Scott & Co (p. 149) THE LOOP Once one of the Midwest's great department stores, it is today indistinguishable from most other chain stores.... *Tel 312/641-7000. www.carsons.com. 1 S. State St., at Madison St. Monroe el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 14 on p. 159.

Chanel (p. 152) MAGNIFICENT MILE Glamorous boutique for suits, little black dresses, and, of course, Chanel No. 5.... *Tel 312/787-5500. www.chanel.com. 935 N. Michigan Ave., at Oak St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Chicago ArchiCenter Shop (p. 150) THE LOOP A gift store run by the Chicago Architecture Foundation, this place carries a great selection of books, small architectural doodads, mugs, and T-shirts.... *Tel 312/922-3432. www.shopcaf.org. 224 S. Michigan Ave., at Jackson St. Jackson el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 14 on p. 159.

Chicago Comics (p. 154) LAKE VIEW With their continuing invasion of both the big and small screens, comic book characters are now omnipresent. To find the source of their power, ask the guys here; from mainstream titles to obscure Japanese anime to the new imaginings of local artists, this is your comic book Valhalla. That also means it's a sort of homing beacon for the criminally dateless, but you have to take the good with the bad.... *Tel 773/528-1983. www.chicagocomics.com. 3244 N. Clark St., at Belmont Ave. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Children in Paradise (p. 154) MAGNIFICENT MILE This downtown haven for literary-minded parents and children doesn't have the same selection as the superstores, but the personal service more than makes up for it.... *Tel 312/951-5437. www.chicagochildrensbooks.com. 909 N. Rush St., at Delaware Place. Chicago el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Cole-Haan (p. 152) MAGNIFICENT MILE Expensive and stylishly conservative men's and women's shoes and other mostly-leather products are sold in this unusually exquisite store.... *Tel 312/642-8995. www.colehaan.com. 673 N. Michigan Ave., at Erie St. Chicago el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Crate & Barrel (p. 150) MAGNIFICENT MILE A homegrown Chicago institution, this store sells clean-lined, stylish furniture and lots and lots of kitchenware.... *Tel 312/787-5900. www.crateandbarrel.com. 646 N. Michigan Ave., at Erie St. Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Crate & Barrel Outlet Store (p. 155) OLD TOWN Stock up on bargain-priced out-of-season home accessories here.... *Tel 312/787-4775. 1864 N. Clybourn Ave., at North Ave. North/Clybourn el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

The Daisy Shop (p. 157) MAGNIFICENT MILE Not your average vintage shop—here, you'll find big designer names at comparatively low prices.... *Tel 312/943-8880. www.daisyshop.com. 67 E. Oak St., between Michigan Ave. and Rush St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Disgraceland (p. 156) LAKE VIEW Secondhand clothes with a decidedly 1960s bent.... *Tel 773/281-5875. 3338 N. Clark St., at Roscoe St. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Donald J. Pliner (p. 151) MAGNIFICENT MILE Its Oak Street location signals that the shoes here are both style-conscious and expensive. But among the eye-catching, colorful party shoes, you'll also find some low-heeled styles that are actually (gasp!) comfortable.... *Tel 312/202-9600. www.donaldjpliner.com. 106 E. Oak St., between Michigan Ave. and Rush St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Elements (p. 155) MAGNIFICENT MILE One of the city's most cosmopolitan tchotchke shops, filled with the kind of pricey tableware, picture frames, vases, etc. that fill high-priced Lake Shore Drive apartments.... *Tel 312/642-6574. 102 E. Oak St., between Michigan Ave. and Rush St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Embelezar (p. 156) BUCKTOWN The kind of furniture and tchotchkes from around the world Pier One can only dream about. You'll need a jet-set-size bank account to buy some of it, but at least the chopsticks and gift cards are affordable.... *Tel 773/645-9705. 1639 N. Damen Ave., at North Ave. Damen el stop (Blue Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Ermenegildo Zegna (p. 152) MAGNIFICENT MILE The Italian designer's gorgeous, and surprisingly colorful, sports coats, suits, and accessories.... *Tel 312/587-9660. www.zegna.com. 645 N. Michigan Ave., at Ontario St. Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Filene's Basement (p. 146) THE LOOP/MAGNIFICENT MILE Bargain-clothing-hunter's delight.... *Loop: Tel 312/553-1055; www.filenesbasement.com; 1 N. State St., at Madison St.; Monroe*

el stop (Red Line) or Madison el stop (Brown Line). Magnificent Mile: Tel 312/482-8918; 830 N. Michigan Ave., between Pearson and Chestnut sts.; Chicago el stop (Red Line).

See Map 13 on p. 158.

See Map 14 on p. 159.

Fudge Pot **(p. 157)** OLD TOWN Mouth-watering handmade fudge.... *Tel 312/943-1777. 1532 N. Wells St., between North Ave. and Schiller St. Sedgwick el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Ginkgo Tree Book Shop **(p. 154)** OAK PARK Tucked next door to Frank Lloyd Wright's original studio, this bookstore specializes in architectural works (not to mention almost everything ever written about Wright).... *Tel 708/848-1606. 951 Chicago Ave., at Forest Ave., Oak Park. Harlem el stop (Green Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Giorgio Armani **(p. 152)** MAGNIFICENT MILE A friendly staff and an incredibly sophisticated, well-chosen selection of the Italian designer's collections in a wonderful new location.... *Tel 312/573-4220. www.giorgioarmani.com. 800 N. Michigan Ave., between Chicago Ave. and Pearson St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Glove Me Tender **(p. 150)** MAGNIFICENT MILE A must-visit shop during cold weather, this boutique stocks almost 100 different brands of gloves for men, women, and children.... *Tel 312/664-4022. www.glovemetender.com. 900 N. Michigan Ave., between Walton St. and Delaware Place. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Hammacher Schlemmer **(p. 152)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Overpriced? Yes. Full of unnecessary gadgets that will probably end up collecting dust in your house? Yes. But it still makes for great browsing.... *Tel 312/527-9100. 445 N. Michigan Ave., between Illinois and E. North Water sts. www.hammacherschlemmer.com. Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

H&M **(p. 146)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Trendy, low-priced clothes mostly for teenagers and 20-somethings.... *Tel 312/640-0060. www.hm.com. 840 N. Michigan Ave., between Pearson and Chestnut sts. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Hermès **(p. 150)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Everything from its signature silk scarves and men's ties to custom-order saddles.... *Tel 312/787-8175. www.hermes.com. 110 E. Oak St., between Michigan Ave. and Rush St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Ikram (p. 153) MAGNIFICENT MILE A sophisticated boutique for fashion-conscious women that manages to be both elegant and cozy.... *Tel 312/587-1000. 873 N. Rush St., between Chestnut St. and Delaware Place. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Iwan Ries & Co (p. 149) THE LOOP This Chicago institution specializes in tobacco and pipes.... *Tel 312/372-1306. www.iwanries.com. 19 S. Wabash Ave., between Madison and Monroe sts. Monroe el stop (Red Line) or Madison el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 14 on p. 159.

Jayson Home & Garden (p. 155) OLD TOWN Two stores across the street from one another, both selling beautiful (and way-overpriced) home and garden accessories.... *Tel 773/525-3100. www.jaysonhomeandgarden.com. 1885 N. Clybourn Ave., between Willow St. and Kenmore Ave. North/Clybourn el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Jazz Record Mart (p. 153) MAGNIFICENT MILE Featuring the world's largest selection of jazz recordings, this busting-at-its-seams store is a local hangout. The staff really knows its stuff.... *Tel 312/222-1467. www.jazzrecordmart.com. 444 N. Wabash Ave.,* at Hubbard St. *Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Krivoy (p. 150) LINCOLN PARK Most everything sold in this highly personal, quirky clothing shop is designed by the owner. The luxurious materials (hand-knit cashmere sweaters, silk scarves, etc.) mean fairly high prices.... *Tel 773/248-1466. 1145 W. Webster St., between Racine and Clifton aves. Fullerton el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Lori's Discount Designer Shoes (p. 152) OLD TOWN Nothing here is super-cheap (these are designer shoes, after all), but prices are substantially lower than retail. Plus, there's a good selection of socks, hosiery, and handbags available, too.... *Tel 773/281-5655. 824 W. Armitage Ave., at Dayton St. Armitage el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Madison & Friends (p. 154) MAGNIFICENT MILE Clothes for babies and kids that are cute, not cutesy.... *Tel 312/642-6403. www.madisonandfriends.com. 940 N. Rush St., at Walton St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Manifesto (p. 155) RIVER NORTH This clever two-story furniture store sells original designs and exacting reproductions of 20th-century classics. And those classic looks come at a fairly steep

price, of course.... *Tel 312/664-0733. 755 N. Wells St., between Chicago Ave. and Superior St. Chicago el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Marilyn Miglin **(p. 150)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Expensive cosmetics and fragrances in a pamper-me-please marble-covered boutique.... *Tel 312/943-1120. 112 E. Oak St., between Michigan Ave. and Rush St. www.marilynmiglin.com. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Marshall Field's **(p. 146)** THE LOOP The legendary Chicago department store.... *Tel 312/781-1000. 111 N. State St., between Randolph and Washington sts. www.marshallfields.com. Washington el stop (Red Line) or Madison el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 14 on p. 159.

McShane's Exchange **(p. 157)** OLD TOWN Consignment shop for women's clothing, with labels ranging from Gucci to the Gap.... *Tel 773/525-0282. 815 W. Armitage Ave., between Halsted and Dayton sts. Armitage el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Multiple Choices **(p. 155)** OLD TOWN Tasteful, creative gifts for everyone, from Grandma to a new baby.... *Tel 773/477-4520. 840 W. Armitage Ave., between Dayton and Fremont sts. www.shopmultiplechoices.com. Armitage el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Neiman Marcus **(p. 146)** MAGNIFICENT MILE A marble-clad tribute to all that's expensive and trendy—a one-stop couture-a-go-go.... *Tel 312/642-5900. 737 N. Michigan Ave., between Superior St. and Chicago Ave. www.neimanmarcus.com. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Nike Town **(p. 155)** MAGNIFICENT MILE The world's most extravagant sporting goods store, it's a shrine to athletes and their footwear.... *Tel 312/642-6363. http://niketown.nike.com. 669 N. Michigan Ave., between Huron and Erie sts. Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Nordstrom **(p. 146)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Refined clothes, shoes, and accessories with world-renowned service—what could be better? They've even got an in-house spa, when all that shopping wears you out.... *Tel 312/379-4300. www.nordstrom.com. 55 E. Grand St., at Rush St. Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Oilily **(p. 154)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Intensely colorful and creative clothing for junior (and hip mamas).... *Tel 312/642-1166. 520 N. Michigan Ave., between Illinois and Grand sts. Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Old Navy (p. 147) THE LOOP Inexpensive clothes that reflect the latest trends.... *Tel 312/551-0522. www.oldnavy.com. 35 N. State St., at Washington St. Washington el stop (Red Line) or Madison el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 14 on p. 159.

Pagoda Red (p. 156) BUCKTOWN This is a fabulous store with high-end antiques from China and Tibet. Despite the elegant pieces on display, the mood here is more friendly than formal.... *Tel 773/235-1188. www.pagodared.com. 1714 N. Damen Ave., at Willow St. Damen el stop (Blue Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Paper Source (p. 155) RIVER NORTH Handmade and machine-made paper, envelopes, and stationery, as well as a very large selection of rubber stamps.... *Tel 312/337-0798. www.papersource.com. 232 W. Chicago Ave., at Wells St. Chicago el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

p.45 (p. 153) BUCKTOWN Hip designer women's clothes from talented people you haven't heard of—yet. Stuff here is pricier than your standard chain store clothes, but a bargain compared to snootier boutiques.... *Tel 773/862-4523. www.p45.com. 1643 N. Damen Ave., between North and Wabansia aves. Damen el stop (Blue Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Plaza Escada (p. 152) MAGNIFICENT MILE Bright, attention-grabbing clothes and accessories for trophy wives.... *Tel 312/915-0500. www.escada.com. 840 N. Michigan Ave., at Chestnut St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Powell's (p. 154) LINCOLN PARK One of the largest used bookstores in town, this is a well-organized and well-lit place.... *Tel 773/248-1444. www.powellschicago.com. 2850 N. Lincoln Ave., between Diversey Pkwy. and George St. Diversey el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Prairie Avenue Bookshop (p. 154) THE LOOP This shop has the country's largest selection of books and periodicals about art, architecture, design, and engineering.... *Tel 312/922-8311. www.pabook.com. 418 S. Wabash Ave., between Van Buren St. and Congress Pkwy. Jackson el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 14 on p. 159.

Reckless Records (p. 153) LAKE VIEW/WICKER PARK Where the kids with cool hair shop for music.... *Lake View: Tel 773/404-5080; www.reckless.com; 3157 N. Broadway, between Belmont Ave. and Briar Place; Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

Wicker Park: Tel 773/235-3727; 1532 N. Milwaukee Ave., at North Ave.; Damen el stop (Blue Line).

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Saffron **(p. 156)** BUCKTOWN Sophisticated and urbane ready-to-wear and custom-made women's suits, separates, and bridal gowns.... *Tel 773/486-7753. 2064 N. Damen Ave., at Dickens Ave. Damen el stop (Blue Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Saks Fifth Avenue **(p. 146)** MAGNIFICENT MILE This contemporary, though rather impersonal, department store carries much of the same basic designer-wear sold all over town. Its main claim to fame is the extensive cosmetics department, with many brands that aren't available anywhere else in town. The men's store is directly across the street.... *Tel 312/944-6500. www.saksfifthavenue.com. 700 N. Michigan Ave., at Superior St. Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Salvage One **(p. 151)** WEST LOOP This gargantuan 100,000-square-foot warehouse offers salvaged used bathroom fixtures, fireplace mantels, etc., etc.... *Tel 312/733-0098. www.salvageone.com. 1840 W. Hubbard St., at Damen Ave. Bus 65 (Grand Ave.).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Savvy Traveler **(p. 157)** THE LOOP Navigate your way through the maze of maps and mobiles to find the right travel books and supplies. Perhaps a new copy of an *Irreverent Guide* for a friend or loved one? Whatever your needs (even if it's just to browse and daydream about a vacation), the friendly staff will help you on your way.... *Tel 312/913-9800. www.thesavvytraveler.com. 310 S. Michigan Ave., at Jackson St. Jackson el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 14 on p. 159.

Sawbridge Studios **(p. 155)** RIVER NORTH Unique, handcrafted, wood furniture designs.... *Tel 312/828-0055. 153 W. Ohio St., between LaSalle and Wells sts. Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

2nd Hand Tunes **(p. 153)** LAKE VIEW This campy little store overflows with used records, CDs, and tapes.... *Tel 773/281-8813. www.2ndhandtunes.com. 2602 N. Clark St., at Wrightwood Ave. Bus 22 (Clark St.).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Sears **(p. 147)** THE LOOP A convenient downtown location to pick up cheap socks or an extra T-shirt.... *Tel 312/373-6000. www.sears.com. 2 N. State St., at Madison St. Monroe el stop (Red Line) or Madison el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 14 on p. 159.

Sportmart (p. 156) RIVER NORTH A sporting-goods mini-mall with everything from tennis rackets to Bulls jerseys (not that anyone wants to wear those anymore).... *Tel 312/337-6151. www.sportmart.com. 620 N. LaSalle St., at Ontario St. Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Stitch (p. 156) BUCKTOWN Minimalist boutique that sells a sparse, carefully selected choice of furniture, pottery (go, Jonathan Adler!), leather goods, and accessories.... *Tel 773/782-1570. 1723 N. Damen Ave., at Wabansia Ave. Damen el stop (Blue Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Strange Cargo (p. 156) LAKE VIEW In addition to used clothing, there's a wide selection of funky furniture and housewares for sale here.... *Tel 773/327-8090. 3448 N. Clark St., at Newport Ave. Addison el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Stuart Weitzman (p. 151) MAGNIFICENT MILE Red carpet-worthy shoes for glamour gals with plenty of spending money.... *Tel 312/943-5760. www.stuartweitzman.com. 900 N. Michigan Ave., between* Delaware Place *and Walton St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Sugar Magnolia (p. 153) MAGNIFICENT MILE Women's clothing from young, up-and-coming designers (although the Oak St. location means you'll pay high-fashion prices).... *Tel 312/944-0885. 34 E. Oak St., between Michigan Ave. and Rush St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Sun King (p. 157) MAGNIFICENT MILE Cool shades from Ray Ban, Vuarnet, and others, all sold at a discount.... *Tel 312/649-9110. 44 E. Chicago Ave., at Wabash Ave. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Tabula Tua (p. 155) OLD TOWN Artsy dishes, serving pieces, and other accessories for your next dinner party.... *Tel 773/525-3500. 1015 W. Armitage Ave., at Kenmore Ave. www.tabulatua.com. Armitage el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Tangerine (p. 156) BUCKTOWN This bright, cheery boutique specializes in colorful, feminine clothing from mid-priced designers, along with fun jewelry.... *Tel 773/772-0505. 1719 N. Damen Ave., at Wabansia Ave. Damen el stop (Blue Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Tender Buttons (p. 151) MAGNIFICENT MILE Scads of new and antique buttons.... *Tel 312/337-7033. 946 N. Rush St, at Walton St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Tiffany & Co (p. 152) MAGNIFICENT MILE Glamorous jewelry (and more: silverware, picture frames, etc.) in a glamorous setting.... *Tel 312/944-7500. www.tiffany.com. 730 N. Michigan Ave., at Superior St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Tod's (p. 151) MAGNIFICENT MILE Made famous by its fine leather elfin driving shoes, this Oak Street boutique sells bags and men's shoes, as well.... *Tel 312/943-0070. 121 E. Oak St., between Michigan Ave. and Rush St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Ultimo (p. 153) MAGNIFICENT MILE The ultimate in designer boutiques, this handsome multilevel men's and women's clothing shop gets everything first.... *Tel 312/787-1171. www.ultimo.com. 114 E. Oak St., between Michigan Ave. and Rush St. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Umbria Ceramics (p. 147) MAGNIFICENT MILE This fun-for-browsing, independently-owned shop stocks classic Italian pottery (along with a few more modern styles). Too bad it's hidden away in a high-rise mall.... *Tel 312/266-9600. www.umbriaceramics.com. 700 N. Michigan Ave., between Superior and Huron sts., in Chicago Place, fourth level. Chicago el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Uncle Fun (p. 154) LAKE VIEW Gag gifts galore at this crammed-beyond-belief shop.... *Tel 773/477-8223. www.unclefunchicago.com. 1338 W. Belmont Ave., between Lakewood and Southport aves. Southport el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Unique Presence (p. 155) OLD TOWN Jewelry, artwork, and even furniture by North American artists (at all price levels). Truly unique.... *Tel 773/388-1808. www.auniquepresence.com. 837 W. Armitage Ave., between Dayton and Freemont sts. Armitage el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Virgin Megastore (p. 153) MAGNIFICENT MILE Big, brash, and stuffed with row after row of CDs, DVDs, and videogames.... *Tel 312/645-9300. www.virginmegamagazine.com. 540 N. Michigan Ave., between Ohio St. and Grand Ave. Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Vosges Haut-Chocolat (p. 157) MAGNIFICENT MILE Chocolate goes gourmet at this candy shop that could pass for a modern art gallery.... *Tel 312/644-9450. www.vosgeschocolate.com. 520 N. Michigan Ave., between Illinois St. and Grand Ave. Grand el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 13 on p. 158.

Windward Sports (p. 156) LAKE VIEW Surfboards, snowboards, Rollerblades, sunglasses, bathing suits, and all other sleek modes of sports equipment are stocked here.... *Tel 773/472-6868. www.windwardsports.com. 3317 N. Clark St., at Buckingham Place. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

Women and Children First (p. 154) ANDERSONVILLE This independent bookstore stocks a wide selection of works by female authors (with a great kids' selection, too).... *Tel 773/769-9299. www.womenandchildrenfirst.com. 5233 N. Clark St., between Foster and Bryn Mawr aves. Berwyn el stop (Red Line).*

See Map 12 on p. 144.

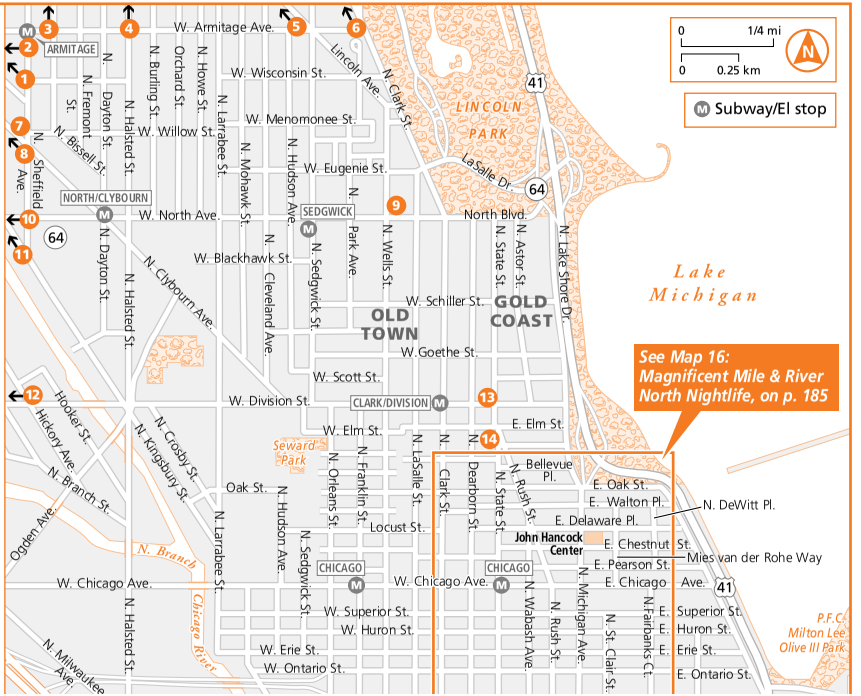
NIGH

TLIFE

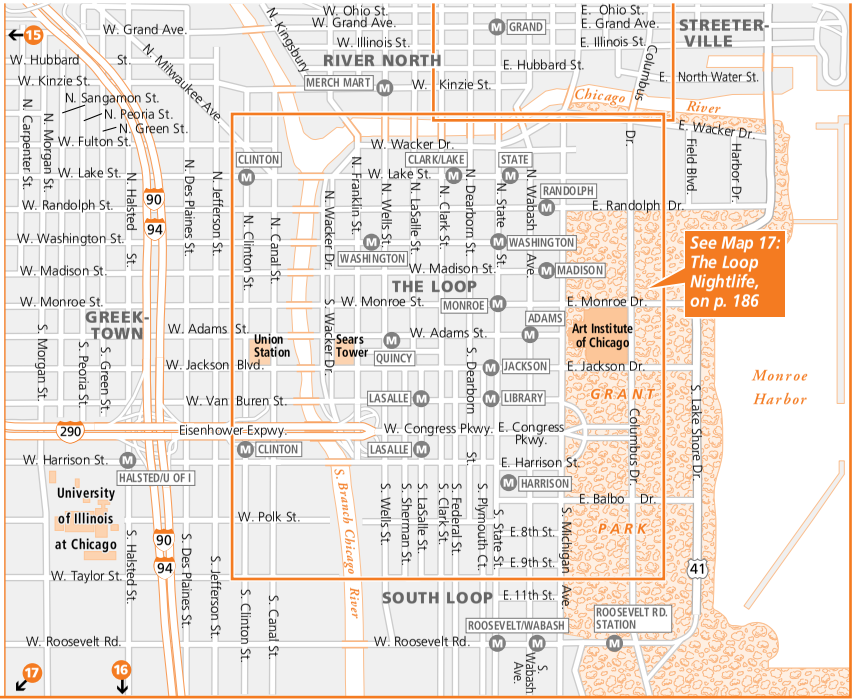
6

Map 15: Chicago Nightlife

- Abbey Pub **1**
- Atmosphere **6**
- Baby Doll Polka Club **17**
- Berlin **6**
- Big Chicks **6**
- Big Wig **12**
- Circuit **4**
- The Closet **3**
- Corcoran's **9**
- Crobar **11**
- Cubby Bear **6**
- Danny's Tavern **2**
- Delilah's **5**
- Double Door **10**
- The Empty Bottle **12**
- Funky Buddha Lounge **15**
- Gamekeepers **2**
- Gentry **4**
- Ginger Man Tavern **6**
- Goose Island Brewery **4, 7**
- Green Dolphin Street **1**
- The Green Mill **1**
- Hi-Tops Café **3**
- The Hunt Club **14**
- John Barleycorn Memorial Pub **5**
- Kingston Mines **4**
- Pops for Champagne **3**
- Rainbo Club **12**
- Red Dog **10**



Rosa's Lounge **2**
Roscoe's Tavern **4**
Sauce **6**
Schaller's Pump **16**
Schubas Tavern **1**
Sheffield's Wine and Beer Garden **3**
Sidetrack **4**
The Twisted Spoke **15**
Webster's Wine Bar **8**
Zebra Lounge **13**



NIGHTLIFE

Basic Stuff

Chicago's bar scene is organized a lot like Disneyland: You don't really need to have a specific destination in mind, just a theme, a mood, a lifestyle. Then hit the strip that suits those parameters. Conventioneers, suburbanites, and ill-informed visitors patronize the nearly indistinguishable pick-up bars radiating from State and Division streets, the traditional hub of the **Rush Street** area, which has been morphing into a dining and shopping scene in recent years. A few blocks of **Lincoln Avenue,** from Armitage to Fullerton, are populated by bars and live-music clubs pandering to clean-cut post-collegiate types. The crowd is basically the same farther north along **Clark Street** in Wrigleyville—a few reggae clubs and slacker-ish contingents mix things up a bit, but the sports bar rules here. Just a few blocks away, a passing parade of gays streams up and down **Halsted Street.** African-Americans congregate at a number of well-heeled nightclubs along **Michigan** and **Wabash** avenues in the South Loop. The spit-polished BMWs and motorcycles displayed outside a couple of bars on **Damen Avenue** north of North Avenue are a sign of the times. Lincoln Parkers have found a beachhead in too-hip-for-its-own-good Wicker Park, though the neighborhood's arty types have managed to hang on to a few of their divey hideouts. All this fragmentation doesn't mean clubbers don't cross boundaries: Choose carefully and you'll find a few places where there's plurality on the dance floor.

Sources

Head for Section 3 of the popular free weekly, the ***Chicago Reader*** (www.chicagoreader.com). Live music is listed according to genre, and there are plenty of ads to browse through in search of nightlife options. In its "Friday" entertainment section, the ***Chicago Tribune*** (www.chicagotribune.com) publishes news of upcoming concerts and an "After Hours" column profiling offbeat evening haunts. An online division of the *Tribune*, www.metromix.com, is an outstanding source of information on what's new and hot in the city. The ***Chicago Sun-Times*** provides hints about nocturnal goings-on in its "Friday Weekend Plus" pullout (www.suntimes.com). ***Hoy*** keeps tabs on live music and happenings in the Latino community (www.holahoy.com); ***N'Digo*** (www.ndigo.com), a free weekly tabloid, covers the African-American entertainment scene. The gay weekly ***Chicago Free Press*** keeps up with gay and lesbian party life (www.chicagofreepress.com).

Liquor Laws and Drinking Hours

Chicago's drinking age is 21, and bars and nightclubs card practically everyone. The bar universe is divided into two constellations: bars with 2am licenses, which allow the taps to flow until 2am every night except Saturday nights/Sunday mornings, when they're open until 3am, and those late-night destinations with 4am licenses, which stay open until 4am every night except Saturday nights/Sunday mornings, when they're open until 5am, and are welcome refuges after the others have called it quits. And remember, Chicago may be home of the blues, but this ain't New Orleans, where revelers tote their beverages in the streets: Drink up before you continue your pub crawl.

The Lowdown

Where grown-ups can be grown-ups... When you want to get away from the kids (anyone five years younger than you are), Chicago offers plenty of places where a "mature" person who doesn't hit the hay by 9pm can enjoy a little civilized company. At the old-money Drake Hotel, the **Coq d'Or** offers a casual, clubby atmosphere with a buzzing crowd of Gold Coast regulars and out-of-towners. **Seasons Lounge** in the posh Four Seasons Hotel is like a living room overlooking the Mag Mile—its upholstered divans are so cushy-comfy that you'll be excused if you nod off after a couple of cocktails. For a perch truly above it all, try the 96th floor of the John Hancock Center, where the **Signature Lounge** offers stunning views of the city from all sides. (Drink prices here are sky-high, too.) Sip a Scotch and stare out at the grid's streetlights disappearing in straight-arrow lines into the horizon.

Calling all slackers... Artists, wannabe rock gods, and pierced-and-tattooed copy-shop employees have created their own exile community in the 'hoods of Wicker Park and Bucktown. At the epicenter is **Rainbo Club,** a former Polish social club where local hipsters and the occasional touring rocker hold forth in snug round booths along the wall. There's even a photo booth in back to accommodate tourists. If you can't be bothered with the chain-smoking crowd blocking the door, head over to **The Empty Bottle,** the reigning Ukrainian Village outpost of cool, where you'll find legions of purposefully disheveled 20-something regulars roosting among the second hand couches

and bar stools. Even when live bands take over the stage, you can still converse comfortably over the noise with your buddies at the front of the bar or in the pool room. You've got a lot of seating options at **Danny's Tavern,** a warren of rooms in an old Victorian house that's been spiffed up with a recent re-do. The loafing vibe has been imported to Lake View at **Delilah's,** a dark, somewhat sinister bar where the bartender spins country classics on Wednesdays and extremely loud punk rock other nights. Follow the exposed electrical wiring upstairs for pinball and pool.

Dance fever... Flashy nightclubs open every few years in Chicago in spooky warehouses on the edge of downtown, and, yes, they are fun the first few months. The rest of the story is predictable: Carloads of suburbanites join the fun. Scenesters grow bored and flee. Fun is over. But aside from those desperate-to-be-trendy places, Chicago boasts a number of true club survivors: places that have been open for years, yet still draw a cool (i.e., not all suburban) crowd. A line of anxious trendy types snakes down the street on weekends in front of **Crobar,** but the cavernous club's dark Gotham City decor and sprawling dance floor—one of the biggest around—make the wait worth it. A pair of second-story lounges provides relief from the pounding house beat. You'll feel like you've stumbled into somebody's loft party at **Red Dog,** a Wicker Park dance club where a diverse aggregation of youngsters grooves to house and hip-hop music on the long, narrow dance floor. The lighting at the **Funky Buddha Lounge** is so low that you can't even see much of the dance floor. That's a shame, because the couples grooving to the DJ's deep-house spins are kind of an inspiration. Furnished with vintage sofas and kitschy-cool light fixtures, this slick new enterprise on a desolate stretch near downtown draws an interesting crowd, one you don't find at many Chicago clubs: sophisticated, racially mixed, slightly older than your typical club rats, with even a little sexual ambiguity. What was once a neighborhood Polish bar has been transformed into **Big Wig,** a debonair nightclub with a vaguely beauty-salon theme. The feel is lounge-y (dim lighting, deep red couches for posing) and the clientele a little older than your typical club kid. Those wild Eighties' nights when Chicago flirted with New York–style club life at the city's very own Limelight—housed in the fortresslike

former Chicago Historical Society building—are long gone. But the same address now hosts the somewhat cheesy **Excalibur,** a sprawling for-the-masses amusement center crawling with suburbanites and tourists who do look like they're having fun. Happily, the gay disco **Berlin** has managed to retain its free-wheeling spirit after more than a decade in business, adding nongays and suburbanites to the mix on the weekends to a hospitable dance floor inexplicably able to absorb ever more spinning and twirling.

Where not to hear the blues

For years, going to "Rush Street" has been synonymous with "Let's party." In the 1960s, the street was home to a slew of great cabarets, bars, clubs, and restaurants—the center of Chicago's nightlife scene. Eventually, places on Rush closed as the street gentrified, and the bar scene moved north to Division Street. The area is still referred to as Rush Street, but unless your idea of a good time is a keg party, there's no real rush to be found. Division is lined with the most hokey bars—crowded, loud, and obnoxious, with beefy bouncers manning most of the doorways. Wet T-shirt contests, hot legs contests, dollar nights, you name it, it's all depressingly here. But maybe Division Street is going the way of Rush Street—in the last few years a Starbucks has opened, as has a huge Gap (the hundred-millionth one in Chicago), and other stores that hopefully will squish out the cheesiness. There are better bars to be found, believe me.

Places to hear live rock...

Back when they were nobodies, REM, Nirvana, and every other cool up-and-coming band played the stage at **Metro** in Wrigleyville, the city's preeminent rock venue. Owner Joe Shanahan has expanded his franchise into rocker haven Wicker Park at **Double Door,** a former biker bar with high pressed-tin ceilings, a beautiful long bar, and good acoustics for rock shows and more. The other major rock outlet in the area is **The Empty Bottle,** an arty club that usually books bands with impeccable indie credentials. Moving away from its original diet of Irish artists, the **Abbey Pub** is developing a solid reputation as a place to see new music. If you can get there early enough, stake out a spot at one of the tables in the front of the balcony for a bird's-eye view of things.

Places to hear live blues... Chicago's famous for smoky blues joints where legendary musicians jam seven nights a week, practically until dawn. At **Kingston Mines,** a fixture for three decades in Lincoln Park, two stages in a comfortably decrepit setting keep the music going without interruption—making for a kind of nonstop frat party, given the crowd. Female vocalists like Big Time Sarah are the specialty of **Blue Chicago,** the name for a pair of blues rooms blocks apart in River North that draws a die-hard crowd. Owner Gino Battaglia is also doing his part to cultivate the next generation of blues lovers: All-ages sets are held Saturday nights in a smoke- and alcohol-free performance space in the basement of the club's gift shop. On the southern edge of downtown, **Buddy Guy's Legends** welcomes both local talents and established stars (Dr. John, Koko Taylor, and Buddy Guy himself when he's in town) to a spacious room catering to tourists with its Hard Rock–style displays of blues memorabilia. One of the most intimate live music joints in town, the **Underground Wonder Bar** is almost impossible to categorize: acts are a mix of blues, jazz, rock, and reggae, and it's a popular haunt of musicians looking for a pick-up gig on their way home for the night. The place gets more interesting (and raucous) as the evening wears on—especially when owner Lonie Walker takes the stage with her Big Bad Ass Company band on Friday and Saturday nights. Another club with a lot of personality is **Rosa's Lounge,** a West Side spot run by, of all people, an Italian mother-son team. They pride themselves on running a friendly operation and draw some top talent to their earthy venue.

Places to hear live jazz... Get an early start at **Andy's Jazz Club,** a well-worn, friendly, downtown jazz listening lounge where the first set kicks off at lunch. One of the city's most veteran jazz presenters, Joe Segal, runs **Jazz Showcase** in River North; the handsome room is furnished with black-and-white photos of jazz legends who've played his clubs over the years. The caliber of music remains the same: a top-flight lineup of both national and local jazz acts. Bringing a little glamour to the local jazz scene, **Green Dolphin Street** has converted an old autobody shop into a sophisticated Forties-style nightclub with an attached restaurant that presents everything from big band to acid jazz. To hear jazz in a setting that hasn't much

changed since jazz's golden age, nestle into a velvet booth at **The Green Mill,** a deco-ish uptown club once owned by one of Al Capone's henchmen. In its latest incarnation, the club has made a name for itself as one of the liveliest jazz venues in town, attracting a wildly eclectic crowd (all ages, classes, and races) that keeps pouring in until the club's late-night closing. It also features a poetry slam every Sunday night.

Sports and suds... For starters, take your pick of most any place along North Clark Street near Wrigley Field, most notably **Cubby Bear,** which fills up with fans before and after Cubs games, or slick, pennant-festooned **Hi-Tops Café,** which overflows onto the sidewalk during Saturday afternoon gridiron games. The prototypical sports scene is **Gamekeepers,** a wood-paneled Lincoln Park bar with every game going on its multitudinous screens. For a more downtown crowd, try **The Hunt Club,** an upscale Rush Street saloon with wide-screen TVs and a large open bar in its airy main room.

Where the boys (and girls) are... An evening stroll down a 10-block strip of North Halsted Street—the Main Street of the lakeside gay enclave known as Boys' Town—will keep any curious club crawler occupied late into the night. Excursions often start at **Roscoe's Tavern,** an inviting antiques-laden saloon populated by a diverse mix of preppies, muscle boys, and tourists. Continue across the street to **Sidetrack,** a sleek video bar where the pretty-boy patrons ogle each other as much as the ubiquitous TV monitors showing Broadway musicals, Madonna tunes, and "Ab Fab" clips. After a couple of dance clubs have bitten the dust, the Halsted Street danceteria **Circuit** has inherited the sacred duty of keeping shirtless muscle boys dancing into the wee hours. The biggest gay dance club in town, Circuit has the sound and lights to keep the party going after the rest of the strip's bars close for the night. One of the only gay spots downtown is the friendly piano bar **Gentry,** a popular after-work stop with a cabaret room and a downstairs video lounge. Despite its name, **Big Chicks** has been overrun by a devoted clientele of not-too-trendy, neighborhood gays (definitely not the ultra-cool Queer Eye set)—a goatee'd, thrift store–outfitted crowd drawn to the sparkling two-room Uptown bar by 50¢ midnight shots, a

high-camp jukebox, free Sunday afternoon buffets, and a welcoming staff. The owner's idiosyncratic art collection alone makes it worth a visit. Located below the Belmont el station, **Berlin** hasn't shown any signs of tiring as one of the city's reigning danceterias. Though it's a small room, really, Berlin maximizes its real estate with wall-to-wall stimuli: a mix of music from New Wave to techno, nonstop videos, go-go boys, and mirrors to check how the light is flattering you. Lesbian nightspots are few and far between in Chicago; the longest-lived hangout is **The Closet,** your standard-issue neighborhood dive. Pinball and darts provide a few distractions, but the best seats in this basic black box are the bar stools peering onto Broadway. The windows really get steamed up on Bloody Mary Sundays and monthly heavy-metal nights. Andersonville, on the North Side of the city, has become a popular lesbian-friendly enclave, with dance clubs such as **Atmosphere** attracting a strong lesbian and gay following.

Hotel hotspots in the Loop... Downtown doesn't exactly swing at night, but a few lively hotel bars cater to night owls. At the Hilton Chicago, **Kitty O'Shea's** manifests its Irish theme with imported Irish bartenders and traditional Irish music. Funky, colorful **Encore** keeps the Hotel Allegro hopping during happy hour (and for post-theater drinks). **Base Bar** caters to the Hard Rock Hotel's rock-'n'-roll theme with live music, DJs, and a dark, nightclubby vibe.

Neighborhood spots downtown and near North Side... An authentic spot that has weathered the onslaught of tourists pretty well is Billy Goat Tavern (see the Dining chapter), a legendary Chicago dive on lower North Michigan Avenue immortalized as the "cheezeburger, cheezeburger" joint on *Saturday Night Live.* The bar at **The Berghoff** (see the Dining chapter) is Chicago's number one bar—that is, the first saloon in the city to get a liquor license after the repeal of Prohibition. For its historical flavor, the dark, oak-paneled room remains a lively after-work destination for downtown suits. They don't make them like the **Zebra Lounge** anymore: This low-lit 10-table room on the Gold Coast, decorated with its namesake in mind, attracts a menagerie of characters who can't help but rub shoulders during the piano artist's nightly serenade. Look for the stainless steel door marking

the entrance to **Harry's Velvet Room,** a romantic underground lounge geared for the swellegant, martini-swilling set. A sign that downtown has picked up, **Ghost Bar,** tucked into a giant condo warehouse upstairs from the restaurant Nine, attracts a fast and fabulous crowd. The house specialty martini is the "Ghostini," a concoction trimmed with a Caspar the Friendly Ghost swizzle stick. The champagne and caviar bar **Narcisse,** a River North salon, resplendent in yards of draped fabric, gilded walls, and opulent chandeliers, even has cosmetic mirrors on the tables for people who take the bar's name to heart.

Neighborhood spots in Lincoln Park/Old Town...
Just as its name suggests, **John Barleycorn Memorial Pub** is a generously proportioned English-style pub that exudes historic charm. The century-old building has functioned as a bar for much of its life, from Twenties speakeasy to favored watering hole of John Dillinger. Judging from the ridiculously beautiful staff, being a model/actress is a prerequisite to working at **Sauce.** While regular folks may drop in for a bite to eat during the day, at night the bar becomes a place to get dolled up and get noticed. Oddly enough, it's not unusual to see the young and beautiful discuss their impending trip to Milan, while the TV over their shoulders is tuned to the latest Blackhawks game. **Corcoran's** has been an Old Town hangout for decades (it's right across the street from Second City). Settle down in the outdoor beer garden and—for the full pub experience—order your pint with a side of bangers and mash.

Neighborhood spots in Lake View/Wrigleyville...
If you want to duck the army of dudes donning turned-back baseball caps on North Clark Street, the **Ginger Man Tavern** provides a sanctuary behind its big picture windows. A hipper, more laid-back clientele than you'll find in the rest of the neighborhood clusters around tightly packed tables and chairs up front or shoots pool in the larger back room. Even if you're not planning to take in one of the folkie/rock bands that are the mainstay of **Schubas Tavern,** the front bar is always a lively gathering place for fresh young neighborhood faces, and the attached Harmony Grill serves pretty good burgers and fries until late. An extensive beer list and an array of rooms to settle into with friends make **Sheffield's Wine and Beer Garden** a home-away-from-home for local 20-somethings.

Neighborhood spots on the South Side... Travelers arriving at Midway Airport might consider stopping by **Baby Doll Polka Club,** where local polkaholics have been gathering for 40 years. The house band, the Merry Makers, plays on weekends as middle-aged men spin their big-haired gals around the small dance floor. Operated by the same family for generations, **Schaller's Pump** is the quintessential Bridgeport bar, where locals gather for dinner on vinyl red-checked tablecloths (there's a corned-beef-and-cabbage special on Thurs) and sit around watching the Sox or the 10 o'clock news. Check out the peephole on a side door for signs of the Prohibition past.

For something a bit different... Some folks come to **The Twisted Spoke** in River West for its monstrous burgers and delectable bar food. But after midnight it's a different sort of crowd. This is Chicago's home of "Smut 'n' Eggs," where you can sip on the famous Road Rash Bloody Mary, munch on some eggs, and watch vintage (and, sometimes, not-so-vintage) porn on the TVs above the bar. Not for the faint of heart, but it is pretty funny to watch the people who walk in unaware of the night's program selection.

For people who wouldn't be caught dead drinking a Bud... Take a peek at the brewing equipment on your way into **Goose Island Brewery,** the city's original microbrewery, which features a fermented repertoire of 40 rotating microbrews including its flagship Honker's Ale and a delicious home-style root beer. They're always ready for a special occasion at **Pops for Champagne:** The elegant Lake View music room stocks more than 125 kinds of sparkling wines. You can buy vino by the glass, or you can train your palate by sampling flights of merlot, chardonnay, and pinot noir at casual, cozy **Webster's Wine Bar** in Lincoln Park, which provides place mats labeled with the names of each of the four or five samples. Other wine bars have followed in its footsteps, and one of the classiest is **Cru Cafe and Wine Bar,** a Gold Coast spot with vintage chandeliers, a fireplace, and an inviting sidewalk cafe. The cafe carries more than 400 wines (50 by the glass), and draws plenty of sophisticates.

Map 16: Magnificent Mile & River North Nightlife

Andy's Jazz Club **14**
Blue Chicago **7**
Coq d'Or **3**
Cru Cafe and Wine Bar **5**
Excalibur **9**
Funky Buddha Lounge **12**
Gentry **13**
Harry's Velvet Room **11**
The Hunt Club **1**
Jazz Showcase **10**
Narcisse **8**
Seasons Lounge **4**
Signature Lounge **6**
Underground Wonder Bar **2**

Map 17: The Loop Nightlife

Andy's Jazz Club **1**
Base Bar **2**
Buddy Guy's Legends **6**
Encore **3**
Ghost Bar **4**
Kitty O'Shea's **5**

The Index

Bars in Chicago either have 2am or 4am licenses. Those with 2am licenses allow the taps to flow until 2am every night except Saturday nights/Sunday mornings, when they're open until 3am, while those late-night destinations with 4am licenses stay open until 4am every night except Saturday nights/Sunday mornings, when they're open until 5am, and are welcome refuges after the others have called it quits. In the listings below, all establishments have a 2am license unless otherwise noted.

Abbey Pub (p. 179) LAKE VIEW A St. Patrick's Day must, the Abbey Pub has become a happening live music venue, attracting local, regional, and even some national touring acts. Regulars drop in for a pint while watching English and Scottish league soccer on the bar's TV or check out the live Irish jam sessions each Sunday.... *Tel 773/478-4408. www.abbeypub.com. 3420 W. Grace St., at Elston Ave. Irving Park el stop (Brown Line), then transfer to bus 80, or take a cab. Cover charge $10–$20 for concerts; no cover at bar.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Andy's Jazz Club (p. 180) MAGNIFICENT MILE A solid downtown place to while away the afternoon or evening listening to hard-working players.... *Tel 312/642-6805. www.andysjazzclub.com. 11 Hubbard St., at State St. Grand el stop (Red Line). Cover charge $5–$10.*

See Map 16 on p. 185.
See Map 17 on p. 186.

Atmosphere (p. 182) ANDERSONVILLE A dance club that's cool enough to feel special but doesn't have enough attitude to move beyond the feel of a neighborhood hangout.... *Tel 773/784-1100. 5355 N. Clark St., between Summerdale and Balmoral aves. Bus 22 or Berwyn el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Baby Doll Polka Club (p. 184) SOUTH SIDE It's across the road from Midway Airport—you can listen to "Roll Out the Barrel" while planes roll down the runway.... *Tel 773/582-9706. 6102 S. Central*

Ave., at W. 61st St. Midway el stop (Orange Line), then transfer to bus 63W. No cover.

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Base Bar **(p. 182)** THE LOOP The Hard Rock Hotel's lobby bar isn't exactly swarming with rock stars, but its clubby atmosphere brings a bit of attitude to the all-business Loop.... *Tel 312/345-1000. 230 N. Michigan Ave., at Lake St. Washington el stop (Red Line) or Randolph el stop (Brown Line). No cover.*

See Map 17 on p. 186.

Berlin **(p. 179)** LAKE VIEW Veteran gay disco that's fairly low on atmosphere but great for people-watching.... *Tel 773/348-4975. www.berlinchicago.com. 954 W. Belmont Ave., at Sheffield Ave. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). Until 4am. Cover charge $3–$5.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Big Chicks **(p. 181)** UPTOWN An out-of-the-way gay alternative to the Halsted Street party parade.... *Tel 773/728-5511. www.bigchicks.com. 5024 N. Sheridan Rd., at Argyle St. Argyle el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Big Wig **(p. 178)** WICKER PARK Here, a former Polish bar has been transformed into a stylish nightclub with a beauty-salon theme. Lounge on one of the salon chair couches and admire (or deride) the hair on parade.... *Tel 773/235-9100. www.bigwigchicago.com. 1551 W. Division St., between Milwaukee and Ashland aves. Division el stop (Blue Line). Until 3am Fri–Sat. Cover charge $5 Fri–Sat; no cover Sun–Thurs.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Blue Chicago **(p. 180)** RIVER NORTH This lively blues club in the heart of the River North tourist zone offers two clubs for one cover.... *Tel 312/642-6261. www.bluechicago.com. 736 N. Clark St., at Superior St. Grand el stop (Red Line). Tel 312/661-0100. 536 N. Clark St., at Grand Ave. Grand el stop (Red Line). Cover charge $6–$7.*

See Map 16 on p. 185.

Buddy Guy's Legends **(p. 180)** THE LOOP An acoustically superb blues hall that also serves up Louisiana-style food.... *Tel 312/427-0333. www.buddyguys.com. 754 S. Wabash Ave., between 8th St. and Balbo Dr. Harrison el stop (Red Line). Cover charge $10–$15.*

See Map 17 on p. 186.

Circuit **(p. 181)** LAKE VIEW The city's biggest gay dance floor and a partying, late-night crowd dressed (and undressed) to fill it.... *Tel 773/325-2233. www.circuitclub.com. 3641 N. Halsted St., at Addison St. Addison el stop (Red Line). Until 4am. Cover charge $5–$10.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

The Closet (p. 182) LAKE VIEW Lesbians in the neighborhood call this unpretentious video bar home, but gay men and straights mix here, too, especially after hours.... *Tel 773/477-8533. 3325 N. Broadway, between Hawthorne St. and Aldine Ave. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). Until 4am. No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Coq d'Or (p. 177) MAGNIFICENT MILE Late nights, customers settle into this wood-paneled bar's red Naugahyde banquettes or crowd around the small piano.... *Tel 312/787-2200. 140 E. Walton St. (Drake Hotel), at Michigan Ave. Chicago el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 16 on p. 185.

Corcoran's (p. 183) OLD TOWN Nothing fancy—just a comfortable neighborhood hangout that's been owned by the same family for decades. If you're lucky enough to be in town during nice weather, head for the beer garden out back.... *Tel 312/440-0885. 1615 N. Wells St., at North Ave. Sedgwick el stop (Brown Line). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Crobar (p. 178) OLD TOWN This multilevel dance factory gets crowded with adventure-seeking yuppies and suburbanites disguised in their best alternative rags.... *Tel 312/266-1900. www.crobar.com. 1543 N. Kingsbury St., at North Ave. North/Clybourn el stop (Red Line). Until 4am. Cover charge $5–$20.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Cru Cafe and Wine Bar (p. 184) MAGNIFICENT MILE This downtown wine bar is elegant and urbane.... *Tel 312/337-4078. 888 N. Wabash Ave., at Delaware Place. Chicago el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 16 on p. 185.

Cubby Bear (p. 181) LAKE VIEW One of Wrigleyville's bigger clubs, this spacious, multifloor space keeps customers busy with pool, darts, and rock bands.... *Tel 773/327-1662. www.cubbybear.com. 1059 W. Addison St., at Clark St. Addison el stop (Red Line). Cover charge $5–$10.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Danny's Tavern (p. 178) BUCKTOWN A candlelit bar in a two-story house, that attracts loyal regulars with its chill-out vibe (no posers, please). Good beer selection.... *Tel 773/489-6457. 1951 W. Dickens Ave., at Damen Ave. Damen el stop (Brown Line). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Delilah's (p. 178) LAKE VIEW Dark and alternative. Find your way to the bar and you'll be greeted with a choice of 150 beers and nearly as much whiskey.... *Tel 773/472-2771. 2771 N. Lincoln Ave., at Diversey Ave. Diversey el stop (Brown Line). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Double Door (p. 179) WICKER PARK Semi-grungy rock club for the obscure, the offbeat, and the up-and-coming. Pool tables downstairs.... *Tel 773/489-3160. www.doubledoor.com. 1572 N. Milwaukee Ave., at North Ave. Damen el stop (Brown Line). Cover charge $5–$15.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

The Empty Bottle (p. 177) UKRANIAN VILLAGE A grunge clubhouse for 20-somethings in a newly gentrifying area.... *Tel 773/276-3600. 1035 N. Western Ave., at Cortez St. www.emptybottle.com. Western el stop (Blue Line), transfer to bus 49 (Western). Cover charge $5–$10.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Encore (p. 182) THE LOOP A hotel lounge with a bit of style and whimsy.... *Tel 312/338-3788. 171 W. Randolph St. (Hotel Allegro), between LaSalle and Wells sts. Washington el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). No cover.*

See Map 17 on p. 186

Excalibur (p. 179) RIVER NORTH This mega-club offers a dance floor, game room, pool hall, and restaurant.... *Tel 312/266-1944. www.excaliburchicago.com. 632 N. Dearborn St., at Ontario St. Grand el stop (Red Line). Cover charge $10 Fri–Sat. No cover Sun–Thurs.*

See Map 16 on p. 185.

Funky Buddha Lounge (p. 178) RIVER NORTH This dimly lit dance-and-drink lair is a hot scene with high cover prices.... *Tel 312/666-1695. 728 W. Grand Ave., between Halsted St. and N. Union Ave. Bus 65 (Grand Ave.). Cover charge $10–$20.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.
See Map 16 on p. 185.

Gamekeepers (p. 181) LINCOLN PARK Television monitors never leave your field of vision at this Lincoln Park sports bar.... *Tel 773/549-0400. 345 W. Armitage Ave., between Orleans St. and Lincoln Ave. Bus 22 (Clark St.). Until 4am. No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Gentry (p. 181) MAGNIFICENT MILE/LAKE VIEW This friendly gay cabaret has both a downtown and Halsted Street presence.... *Magnificent Mile: Tel 312/836-0933; www.gentryofchicago.com. 440 N. State St., at Hubbard St.; Grand el stop (Red Line). Lake View: Tel 773/348-1053; 3320 N. Halsted St., at Aldine Ave.; Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). Cover $5–$10 at both locations.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.
See Map 16 on p. 185.

Ghost Bar (p. 183) THE LOOP Downtown's first real hotspot, this super-smooth bar above the restaurant Nine has been white-hot with overdressed singles on the make.... *Tel 312/575-9900.*

www.n9ne.com/ghostbar.asp. 440 W. Randolph St., Clinton el stop (Green Line). Open Thurs–Sat only. No cover.

See Map 17 on p. 186.

Ginger Man Tavern **(p. 183)** LAKE VIEW This unpretentious Wrigleyville bar offers a huge selection of mircobrews on tap.... *Tel 773/549-2050. 3740 N. Clark St., at Grace St. Addison el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Goose Island Brewery **(p. 184)** OLD TOWN/WRIGLEYVILLE A brew-pub restaurant with a handsome rectangular front bar.... *Old Town: Tel 312/915-0071; www.gooseisland.com; 1800 N. Clybourn Ave., at Sheffield Ave.; North/Clybourn el stop (Red Line). Wrigleyville: Tel 773/832-9040; 3535 N. Clark St., between Eddy St. and Cornelia Ave.; Addison el stop (Red Line). No cover at either location.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Green Dolphin Street **(p. 180)** LINCOLN PARK This retro-cool nightclub (with live music nightly) is an out-of-the-way place to catch a range of jazz-influenced performers.... *Tel 773/395-0066. www.jazzitup.com. 2200 N. Ashland Ave., at Webster St. Armitage el stop (Brown Line), then a short cab ride. Cover charge $5–$20.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

The Green Mill **(p. 181)** UPTOWN This movie-set-perfect jazz club draws an eclectic crowd.... *Tel 773/878-5552. 4802 N. Broadway, at Lawrence Ave. Lawrence el stop (Red Line). Until 4am. Cover charge $5–$10.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Harry's Velvet Room **(p. 183)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Sophisticated, sexy, snobby: This downtown lair oozes ambience.... *Tel 773/527-5600. 56 W. Illinois St., between Dearborn and Clark sts. Grand el stop (Red Line). Until 4am. Cover charge $10 Fri–Sat. No cover Sun–Thurs.*

See Map 16 on p. 185.

Hi-Tops Café **(p. 181)** LAKE VIEW This popular Wrigleyville saloon has a large bar up front and a big-screen TV. It's a good place to hang before and after Cubs games. Later at night, it's one big frat-party scene.... *Tel 773/348-0009. 3551 N. Sheffield Ave., at Addison St. Addison el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

The Hunt Club **(p. 181)** MAGNIFICENT MILE This upscale sports bar attracts a youngish crowd with a dance floor and pool table.... *Tel 312/988-7887. 1100 N. State St., at Cedar St. Clark/Division el stop (Red Line). Until 4am. No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.
See Map 16 on p. 185.

Jazz Showcase (p. 180) MAGNIFICENT MILE A tuxedoed staff attends to you at one of the city's leading jazz clubs.... *Tel 312/670-BIRD. www.jazzshowcase.com. 59 W. Grand Ave., between Dearborn and Clark sts. Grand el stop (Red Line). Cover charge $20–$25.*

See Map 16 on p. 185.

John Barleycorn Memorial Pub (p. 183) LINCOLN PARK A stately saloon decorated with models of antique sailing vessels.... *Tel 773/348-8899. 658 W. Belden St., at Lincoln Ave. Fullerton el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Kingston Mines (p. 180) LINCOLN PARK With two different acts of live music blaring in two different rooms, this Chicago institution on the blues scene heats up with capacity crowds.... *Tel 773/477-4646. www.kingstonmines.com. 2548 N. Halsted St., between Wrightwood and Lill aves. Fullerton el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). Until 4am. Cover charge $10–$15.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Kitty O'Shea's (p. 182) THE LOOP You'll hear traditional Irish music every night at this tavern in the Chicago Hilton that's a far cry from your average personality-free hotel bar. Even the bartenders are authentic, shipped in straight from Ireland.... *Tel 312/922-4400, ext 4454. 720 S. Michigan Ave., at Balbo Dr. Harrison el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 17 on p. 186.

Narcisse (p. 183) RIVER NORTH This swank-o-rama lounge/restaurant is a magnet for model-y types and those who want to bask in the glow of their clear skin.... *Tel 312/787-2675. www.narcisse.us. 710 N. Clark St., between Superior and Huron sts. Chicago el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 16 on p. 185.

Pops for Champagne (p. 184) LAKE VIEW This sophisticated boîte features pages and pages of champagnes, as well as an array of wines and spirits.... *Tel 773/472-1000. 2934 N. Sheffield Ave., between Oakdale and Wellington aves. Diversey el stop (Brown Line). Most nights cover charge $5–$10.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Rainbo Club (p. 177) WICKER PARK The art students, bike messengers, local rockers, and their tattooed ilk clear out of this former Polish social club on Fridays to make way for slumming yuppies checking out the scene.... *Tel 773/489-5999. 1153 N. Damen Ave.,* at Haddon Ave. *Division el stop (Blue Line), then a short cab ride. No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Red Dog (p. 178) WICKER PARK Get ready to sweat to the house beat with the youngish, diverse crowd at this urban dance pad.... *Tel 773/278-1009. 1958 W. North Ave. (entrance in alley), at* Damen *Ave. Damen el stop (Blue Line). Until 4am. Open Mon and Fri–Sun only. Cover charge $5–$15.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Rosa's Lounge (p. 180) LOGAN SQUARE A little off the beaten path, but that's just how devotees to this down-home blues club like it.... *Tel 773/342-0452. www.rosaslounge.com. 3420 W. Armitage Ave., at Kimball Ave. Logan Square el stop (Blue Line), then a short cab ride. Closed Sun–Mon. Cover charge $5–$15.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Roscoe's Tavern (p. 181) LAKE VIEW There's something for everyone (billiard area, dark dance floor, outdoor patio, antiques-filled bar) at this popular gay bar.... *Tel 773/281-3355. www.roscoes.com. 3356 N. Halsted St., at Roscoe St. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). Cover charge $4 Sat after 10pm. No cover Sun–Fri or Sat before 10pm.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Sauce (p. 183) LINCOLN PARK An interesting paradox of a bar, Sauce attracts both the fraternity and the socialite crowds. An outdoor patio bustles during the warmer months with athletes dropping in from the lake and the park nearby for a victory beer or a snack from the somewhat pricey menu. The gorgeous staff may well distract you from what you're about to spend.... *Tel 312/932-1750. 1750 N. Clark St., between Lincoln Ave. and Eugenie St. Bus no. 22 (Clark St.). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Schaller's Pump (p. 184) SOUTH SIDE This century-old bar (there's a peephole on the side door from Prohibition times) serves a menu of burgers and steaks, plus a mean corned-beef-and-cabbage plate on Thursdays.... *Tel 773/847-9378. 3714 S. Halsted St., at 37th St. Sox/35th St. el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Schubas Tavern (p. 183) LAKE VIEW Come to this old Schlitz saloon to catch the best troubadours the city (and country) has to offer. Live music plays 7 days a week in the back room of this comfy venue; the front bar is a neighborhood hangout (rather than a pickup scene).... *Tel 773/525-2508. www.schubas.com. 3159 N. Southport Ave., at Belmont Ave. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line) or Southport el stop (Brown Line). Cover charge $10–$15 for live music. No cover at bar.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Seasons Lounge (p. 177) MAGNIFICENT MILE This is a restful oasis, with a huge fireplace and plush furnishings, in the posh Four Seasons Hotel on the Mag Mile.... *Tel 312/280-8800. 120 E. Delaware Place, at Michigan Ave. Chicago el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 16 on p. 185.

Sheffield's Wine and Beer Garden (p. 183) LAKE VIEW True to its name, this neighborhood bar has an appealing beer garden, complete with a pool table. Squeeze in among the local 20-somethings who crowd the place.... *Tel 773/281-4989. 3258 N. Sheffield Ave., at School St. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Sidetrack (p. 181) LAKE VIEW This high-tech gay bar babysits some of the city's best-looking men with TVs all over the walls screening camp classics from Broadway, Madonna videos, and "Ab-Fab" re-runs.... *Tel 773/477-9189. www.sidetrackchicago.com. 3349 N. Halsted St., between Roscoe and Buckingham sts. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Signature Lounge (p. 177) MAGNIFICENT MILE Come here for a sky-scraping view atop the John Hancock Center. Expect the drink prices to include the cost of the view.... *Tel 312/787-9596. 875 N. Michigan Ave., at Chestnut St. Chicago el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

See Map 16 on p. 185.

The Twisted Spoke (p. 184) RIVER WEST While this friendly biker bar draws raves for its hamburgers and lack of pretension, it raises eyebrows for its infamous "Smut 'n' Eggs" at midnight on Saturdays. Not for the modest, at those times, the secluded bar area features several TVs showing porn while you eat and drink. Mmmm, sacrilicious.... *Tel 312/666-1500. www.twistedspoke.com. 501 N. Ogden Ave., at Grand Ave. Bus 65 (Grand Ave.), or take a cab. No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Underground Wonder Bar (p. 180) MAGNIFICENT MILE It's clear that everybody really loves music in this funky little jazz club. Stay late, and maybe you'll catch one of the local greats who often drop in for a pick-up gig on their way home.... *Tel 312/266-7761. www.undergroundwonderbar.com. 10 E. Walton St., between Rush and State sts. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Until 4am. Cover charge $3–$6.*

See Map 16 on p. 185.

Webster's Wine Bar (p. 184) LINCOLN PARK This bar caters to both the wine connoisseur and neophyte. The back library is a cigar lounge.... *Tel 773/868-0608. 1480 W. Webster Ave., at Clybourn Ave. Fullerton el stop (Red Line or Brown Line), then a short cab ride. No cover.*

See Map 15 on p. 174.

Zebra Lounge (p. 182) GOLD COAST This quirky piano lounge is good for an entertaining late-night interlude.... *Tel 312/642-5140. 1220 N. State Pkwy., at State St. Clark/Division el stop (Red Line). No cover.*

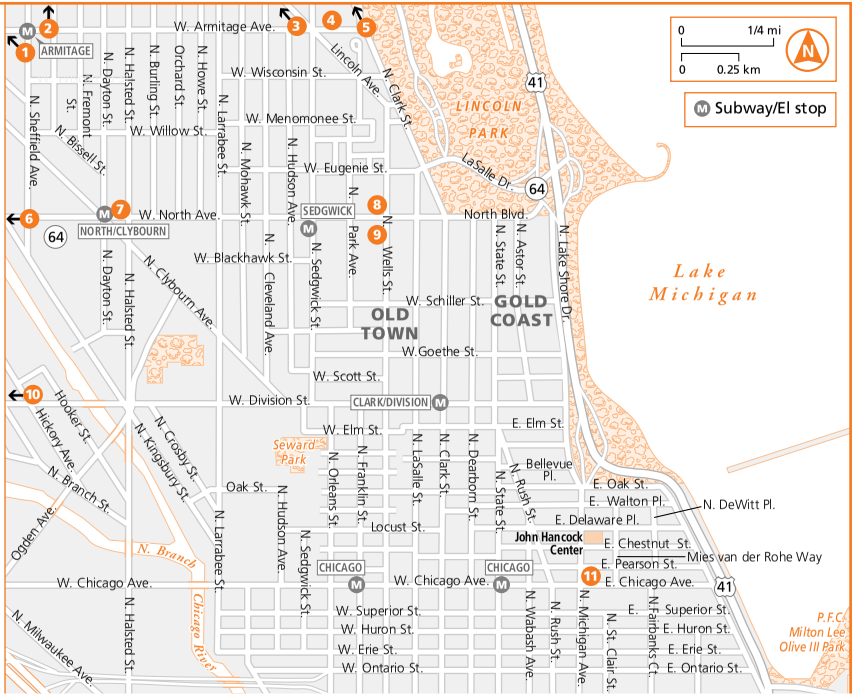
See Map 15 on p. 174.

ENTERTA

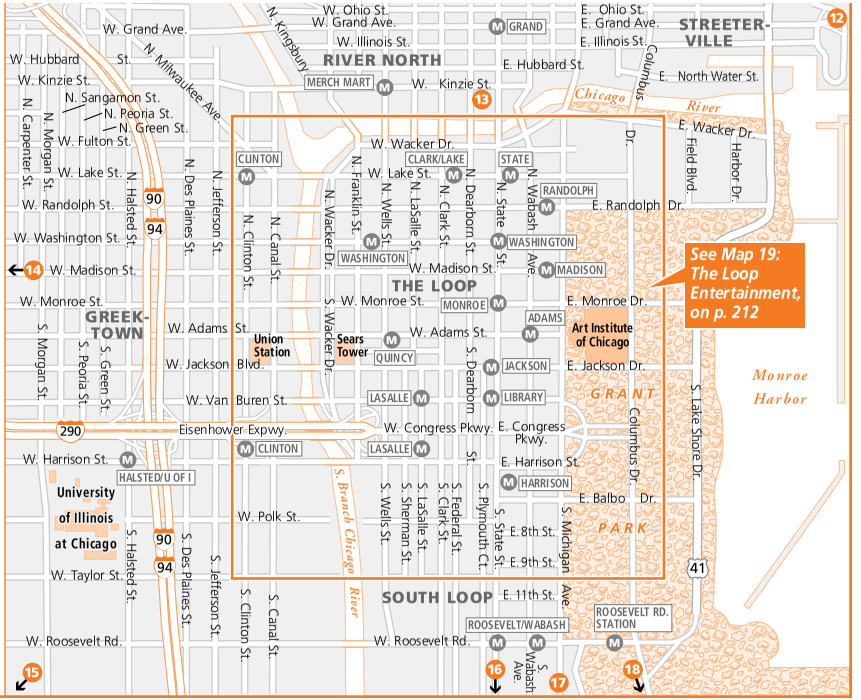
INMENT 7

Map 18: Chicago Entertainment

- Bailiwick Repertory **1**
- Chicago Bears **18**
- Chicago Blackhawks **14**
- Chicago Bulls **14**
- Chicago Cubs **2**
- Chicago Fire **18**
- Chicago Shakespeare Theater **12**
- Chicago White Sox **16**
- Court Theatre **15**
- Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago **17**
- ETA Creative Arts Foundation **15**
- Guild Complex **10**
- The Hideout **6**
- House of Blues **13**
- ImprovOlympic **5**
- Lincoln Lodge **3**
- Links Hall **2**
- Lookingglass Theatre Company **11**
- Metro **5**
- Neo-Futurists **1**
- Old Town School of Folk Music **3**
- Park West **4**
- Ravinia Park **2**



Second City **8**
Skyline Stage **12**
Steppenwolf Theatre Company **7**
Tweeter Center **15**
U.S. Cellular Field **16**
United Center **14**
The Vic **2**
Victory Gardens **3**
Wrigley Field **2**
Zanies **9**



ENTERTAINMENT

Basic Stuff

Forget any notions you may have about the Midwest as hopelessly square—there are plenty of boundary-pushing artists in Chicago. The stock of creative folk is constantly renewed by students coming out of universities and emigrants from all over the Midwest, and not everybody who makes it big here immediately jets off to the coasts—plenty of actors, musicians, and dancers, like regular non-artistic newcomers, find it such a manageable place to live that they end up staying. Though big Broadway imports often run for months, Chicagoans don't hold their breath for out-of-towners to grace their stages: The city hosts enough home-grown shows to keep more than 300 theater companies busy. In fact, many of the smaller, offbeat theaters serve as a late-night alternative to the bar scene: Some shows often don't start until 10:30pm (or later), and a few even allow alcohol, if they don't happen to sell it themselves. Six professional sports teams (including two baseball teams) confer a certain kind of prestige on the city, while highbrow, world-class institutions like the **Lyric Opera** and the **Chicago Symphony** have given Chicago the serious outside validation it craves as the perennial second city.

Sources

The city's main alternative paper, the ***Chicago Reader*** (www.chicagoreader.com), gets much of its heft from voluminous reviews, listings, and advertisements for concerts and performing arts. Published on Thursdays, the tabloid prides itself on providing the most complete theater coverage in the city, reviewing even the most offbeat productions. More extensive profiles and analyses are carried in the ***Chicago Tribune***'s daily arts section and its "Friday" entertainment pullout (www.chicagotribune.com). The competing ***Sun-Times*** is worth a look in its Friday "Weekend Plus" and Sunday "Showcase" sections (www.suntimes.com). For updates on the week's music and dance offerings, call the **Chicago Dance and Music Alliance** hotline (Tel 312/987-1123; www.chicagoperformances.org). Look to the entertainment section of ***N'Digo*** (www.ndigo.com), a free weekly tabloid, for an African-American perspective; ***Hoy*** (www.holahoy.com) is a Spanish-language free weekly published by the *Tribune* that offers a weekly calendar of Latino-related events; and the city's predominant lesbian and gay newspaper, the ***Chicago Free Press*** (www.chicagofreepress.com), offers a

rundown on gay nightlife happenings. Tune into **WBEZ** (91.5 FM), the local National Public Radio affiliate, for erudite discussions of the latest cultural happenings. A few comprehensive sources on the Web are **www.metromix.com** and **http://chicago.citysearch.com**.

Getting Tickets

When you're buying tickets to concerts, shows, and sporting events, try to avoid service charges by buying tickets in person at the box office. But in most cases, the monolithic ticket agent **Ticketmaster** (www.ticketmaster.com) is the only game in town. You can charge tickets by calling Tel 312/559-1212 or pay with cash only at one of its outlets at any Dominick's grocery store, **Carson Pirie Scott & Co.** (1 S. State St.), or several **Hot Tix** locations (see below). If you're willing to pay even bigger bucks, you can get tickets to just about any event by thumbing through the Yellow Pages for one of more than 40 licensed ticket brokers (a fair one is **Gold Coast Tickets;** Tel 800/889-9100 or 312/644-6446). They take credit card orders by phone and deliver overnight or the same day (of course, adding various commissions). Less legitimate, and a misdemeanor in Illinois, is selling scalped tickets. But take a walk around Wrigley Field or the United Center on a game day and you'll see that the law hasn't exactly driven the illegal ticket trade underground. You don't always have to resort to such desperate measures, especially if a theater outing is on your agenda. Besides full-price Ticketmaster events, **Hot Tix,** run by the nonprofit **League of Chicago Theatres** (Tel 312/554-9800; www.chicagoplays.com), also sells half-price, day-of-show tickets to many theatrical productions, concerts, and dance performances in the city and suburbs. Available by credit card, check, or cash, tickets can be purchased only in person at several outlets: across from the **Daley Center** at 78 W. Randolph St.; the city of Chicago's **WaterWorks Visitor Center,** 163 E. Pearson St. (at Michigan Ave.); **Tower Records** in Lincoln Park; and the **North Shore Center for the Performing Arts,** 9501 Skokie Blvd., in north-suburban Skokie. Ticket availability varies from day to day, but most don't sell out until later in the day. The outlets are open daily, and tickets to many weekend performances are sold on Friday. You can generally see off-Loop shows by leaving your name on a theater's answering machine. Your seats will be guaranteed if you show up at least 15 minutes before showtime; someone will return your call if they're sold out.

Larger theaters guarantee seats if you pay by credit card over the phone, although they'll stick you with a service charge. A few theaters, including the biggest ones in town, offer discount or half-price tickets at the box office the night of the performance. Many others regularly reduce the price of admission for students and seniors.

The Lowdown

The theater establishment... Every year, scads of theater grads dream of following the trajectory of the highly acclaimed **Steppenwolf Theatre Company,** which was born out of a North Shore church basement in the Seventies and has settled down into its own modern theater complex in Lincoln Park. These days Steppenwolf ensemble members—Gary Sinise, John Malkovich, Joan Allen, and Laurie Metcalf, among them—show up everywhere from film to TV, so don't count on seeing them here. However, they remain vested in the theater that launched their careers, and some of them show up now and then to help drum up ticket sales and audience interest (the bad news: Shows with a Steppenwolf "star" might be sold out by the time you get here). Steppenwolf continues to be a major presence in the city—with world premieres and inventive adaptations marked by visual pyrotechnics, the theater's productions are always the subject of much scrutiny. Of course, risk-taking is, well, risky, and these perpetrators of the in-your-face Chicago acting school still occasionally prove too daring for audiences. The other biggie in town is the **Goodman Theatre,** the city's oldest and largest resident theater, which offers a season of crowd-pleasing plays and musicals; often it hosts the premieres by the likes of David Mamet, director Frank Galati, Edward Albee, and MacArthur genius grant winner Mary Zimmerman. The Goodman's home in the heart of the Loop, at Randolph and Dearborn Streets, incorporates the facades of two old theaters and is joined by a restaurant and retail center. The theater, which opened in 2000, further enlivened the city's growing theater district, joining the **Chicago Theatre,** a refurbished 1921 movie palace, now a venue for musical stage shows and concerts (the brightly-lit vertical "Chicago" sign is a signature image of the city—and a good

backdrop for tourist photos). Adding to the downtown scene is the rehabilitated Oriental Theater, which was reborn as the **Ford Center for the Performing Arts** when it reopened in 1998. All of these stages have meant serious competition for the **Auditorium Theatre,** a Louis Sullivan–designed architectural masterpiece with wonderful acoustics, and the **Shubert Theatre,** a former vaudeville house dating to 1906 that's also been a destination for Broadway imports. Alas, while a North Loop theater district has long been a dream of city planners, so far, many of the theaters have gone begging for shows, and the dazzling marquees have been dark too many nights. The **Chicago Shakespeare Theater** brings the Bard to the masses at Navy Pier; its beautiful thrust-stage theater attracts many local subscribers, so call in advance if you want to get tickets. Down in brainy Hyde Park, another of the city's venerable resident theaters, the **Court Theatre,** presents classical drama, past and present, in its intimate 250-seat house. Works from Moliere, Shakespeare, and Ibsen, often in repertoire, are typical.

The new generation... The **Lookingglass Theatre Company** has earned critical and commercial success with highly physical, lyrically-staged productions of literary works, as well as original works rooted in company members' personal obsessions. This ensemble of Northwestern theater grads even has a certified star in its founding ranks: sensitive guy David Schwimmer (Ross on the former sitcom *Friends*). The company made the transformation from small-and-struggling troupe to full-fledged member of the local theater establishment in the past decade; the ultimate proof of its success is the theater's high-profile location in the historic Water Tower on Michigan Avenue. In Lincoln Park, **Victory Gardens** prides itself on good, if somewhat middlebrow, fare—the kind of stuff guaranteed not to alienate people looking for a nice dinner and a show. The twist here is that Victory Gardens premieres only new works, often by local playwrights, so don't expect to see *Our Town* or *Guys and Dolls.* Still, new doesn't mean avant-garde; the shows here are accessible and often emotionally touching. Victory Gardens won a Tony Award for best regional theater in 2001, so they must be doing something right.

On the fringes... You can hardly walk a block on the North Side without stumbling across a storefront theater. On any given night, a small production is guaranteed an audience of, say, eight people: actors' moms, actors' friends (also actors), actors' long-suffering girlfriends (actors, too), and perhaps even a few nonacting innocent bystanders. Though some of the stuff can be raw or amateurish, a few of the more original, exciting shows in town toil for months in modest, out-of-the-way theaters until a word-of-mouth buzz attracts the notice of the downtown critics and vaults the show onto a higher-profile stage. Epitomizing Chicago's late-night theater scene is the long-running hit *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind,* performed by the **Neo-Futurists.** They promise "30 plays in 60 minutes," an entertaining evening (Fri and Sat at 11:30pm or 7pm Sun) with much left to chance: Audience members pay $5 plus the roll of a six-sided die (therefore $6–$11) and determine the random order of short skits by shouting out their assigned numbers to performers. The group has written more than 3,000 plays, so no evening is ever the same. You'll miss out on one of the most creative storytelling experiences in town (or anywhere) if you skip a production from **Redmoon Theater.** Using both live actors and puppets in all sizes with great style and visual fun, the company has brought to life original plays based on stories of *Moby Dick, Frankenstein,* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame;* Redmoon is also well known for its rather enchanting neighborhood Halloween and Winter Solstice celebrations. **Bailiwick Repertory** is a busy Lincoln Park theater space that gives young companies a chance to develop and produce their own interesting, sometimes uneven, productions that aren't above using gratuitous nudity to draw audiences to the many gay-themed shows. Chicago's only gay theater, **About Face Theatre,** has quickly built a solid reputation in only a few years with fresh, ambitious productions of gay-themed works. In 1998, About Face moved into its own space in the heart of the gay ghetto, Boys Town. It's a hike down to 75th Street on the South Side for the city's most prominent African-American theater, but the **ETA Creative Arts Foundation** has earned a reputation for staging top-notch productions of serious drama by black playwrights. Theater at its most basic level can be found in the work of the **Scrap Mettle SOUL**

community theater group. England's national health minister paid a visit to the group's rehearsals in order to learn more about its inclusive theatrical approach, which embraces people regardless of experience, race, gender, sexual preferences, or disability.

Classical sounds... It's easy to slip into hyperbole when referring to the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra,** but we'll do it anyway: The 110-member body is one of the country's top orchestras, in large measure because of a peerless brass section chaired by one of the world's finest trumpeters, Adolph Herseth, and its principal horn player, Dale Clevenger. A traditionally strong wind section also makes the CSO popular among fans of Strauss, Mahler, and Beethoven. Even when concerts are sold out, it's worth stopping by on the night of the performance to see if you can nab turned-back tickets from subscribers. The CSO's home base, **Orchestra Hall,** reopened in 1997 after a $105 million renovation that sharpened the auditorium's less-than-perfect acoustics (local legend claims that CSO founder Theodore Thomas died a few weeks after Daniel Burnham's concert hall debuted in 1905, so horrified was he by the acoustics). It's now the centerpiece of **Symphony Center,** an expanded musical complex center with a new recital hall, an interactive education center, and a restaurant. Along with the CSO, the Symphony Center hosts a series of jazz, classical, and chamber music concerts, piano recitals, and the occasional vocalist. Also performing at the Symphony Center, the **Chicago Civic Orchestra,** the CSO's "farm team" of students and semiprofessional musicians, has a similar repertoire, but experiments more with new works by young composers—it's easier for CCO to do that, since tickets are free. The CSO shares its summer home, the pastoral North Shore music venue **Ravinia Park,** with visiting orchestras, chamber music ensembles, and soloists. Though the music ostensibly draws people to this idyllic, tree-covered park, there's also the competition to out-do everyone else with your picnicking accoutrements (regulars here set up spreads with fine china, linen napkins and even candelabras). Right in the city's front yard, the **Grant Park Music Festival,** a free music festival featuring a professional symphony orchestra and chorus, offers 10 weeks of summer concerts 5 nights a week.

Recently, the music series moved to a new home in the city's multimillion-dollar extension of Grant Park, known as Millennium Park, where the music competes with the spectacular new Pritzker Music Pavilion, designed by architectural maestro Frank Gehry and framed by ribbons of titanium steel.

Chicago in the movies, part 3—The Suburbs

Director/writer/producer John Hughes was responsible for a raft of movies that immortalized the lakeshore Chicago suburbs: Sixteen Candles *(1984),* The Breakfast Club *(1985), and* Home Alone *(1990). In* Ferris Bueller's Day Off *(1986), an impish Matthew Broderick borrowed his pal's dad's Porsche for a joy ride into the city. The great* Ordinary People *(1980), directed by Robert Redford and starring Mary Tyler Moore, Judd Hirsch, and Timothy Hutton, was filmed mostly in affluent Lake Forest. Then, of course, there's* Risky Business *(1983), in which Tom Cruise popularized parading around in your underwear. Mike Myers and Dana Carvey played pubescent public-access heroes in* Wayne's World *(1992), but to Chicagoans the real star was former Blackhawks hockey star Stan Mikita, who made a cameo appearance as the owner of a donut shop.*

What's opera, doc?... Chicago may be a sports-mad town, but seats for the **Lyric Opera of Chicago** are the toughest ticket in town. Over the last couple of decades, the Lyric has vaulted into the ranks of the opera world's heavy hitters, with a string of financially successful and artistically ambitious seasons. Along with the usual sturdy museum pieces from the opera canon, the Lyric also stages 20th-century works, including a few experimental pieces, just to keep audiences on their toes. It may not have the cachet of the Lyric, but the **Chicago Opera Theater** makes opera accessible to the masses. For starters, all of the works (mostly American operas) are sung in English; what the company saves on supertitles it can spend on professional singer-actors, costumes, and sets, often coming up with creative reinterpretations of classic operas. While opera snobs may be disappointed here, tickets are less pricey and an easier buy, and a smaller venue gives audiences a degree of intimacy you won't find at Lyric (unless you've got floor seats).

Men in tights... Chicago dance often gets lost in the shuffle among other performing arts. But the opening of the **Harris Theater for Music and Dance** in Millennium Park has raised the profile of local dance groups (and finally gave

them a regular place to perform). A good resource for the latest on the local dance scene is the **Chicago Dance and Music Alliance** (Tel 312/987-1123). Classical ballet had long struggled for a foothold in Chicago, but that's changed since the **Joffrey Ballet of Chicago** moved here from Manhattan in 1995. The company, which continues to be led by its cofounder Gerald Arpino, performs regularly in the city, with regular engagements in the fall and spring, along with a very popular Victorian-American staging of *The Nutcracker* in December. An exciting local company with national aspirations is **Hubbard Street Dance Chicago,** a 20-member ensemble founded by Broadway veteran Lou Conte. Its technical mastery has earned it star status, though its blend of jazz, ballet, and modern dance is crowd-pleasingly safe. Hubbard Street dancers often make the leap from the **River North Chicago Dance Company,** a younger, hipper troupe strong on jazz that performs commercial, though highly skilled, MTV-inspired choreography. Vibrant tribal costumes, energetic drumming, and traditional dance stress the African and African-American experience in performances by the widely touring **Muntu Dance Theater of Chicago.** The **Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago** provides a venue for a lot of hometown performers as well as touring guest artists from around the world, including DanceAfrica, a celebration of African and African-American dance and music. If you enjoy getting close enough to feel dancers sweat, tiny **Links Hall** presents experimental, often raw performances by young dancers and choreographers, as well as returning veterans.

In concert... The **Tweeter Center** is your basic theater-under-the-stars. It's fine when you feel like driving a million miles out to the suburbs and indulging in a rock concert spectacle with 30,000 other people. More rarefied is **Ravinia Park,** summer home of the Chicago Symphony and an eclectic menu of dance, opera, jazz, and entertainers from Tony Bennett to Willie Nelson. A mix of music, dance, and theater moves front and center at the **Skyline Stage,** a 1,500-seat open-air theater under a pristine white canopy on Navy Pier. The name **House of Blues** is a bit of a misnomer, since this venue books musical acts that span the musical scale, from alternative rock to swing to reggae. Performers take the stage in an ornate faux-European

opera house exuberantly embellished with owner Isaac Tigrett's sprawling collection of Mississippi Delta folk art (check out the first-balcony bar, created by local outsider artist Mr. Imagination). Co-owned by Dan Aykroyd—yes, Elwood Blues himself, who smashed up hundreds of police cars in Daley Plaza, in the first *Blues Brothers* movie—the House of Blues complex also encompasses a Southern-style restaurant (with live blues daily) and a blues-themed hotel, all carved out of the base of the corncob-shaped Marina City on the north side of the Chicago River. Before they hit stadiums (or perhaps on the long slide down), a lot of testosterone-infused rock acts come through **The Vic,** a Lake View theater dating to the teens that doubles as a second-run movie house called the "Brew 'n View," where you can drink beer while watching the show. Another midsize venue, **Park West,** is a more upscale nightclub that brings in an assortment of alternative rock, reggae, and jazz acts; there's not a bad seat in the house. Right up the street from Wrigley Field, **Metro** is the granddaddy of rock clubs, a former theater that's a good grungy place to see many touring acts before they're booked into bigger venues. REM and Nirvana played here back when they were nobodies. Get here early to claim a seat in the balcony, unless you want to join the mosh pit on the floor. If you're over 25, you've probably never heard of any of the indie bands playing at **The Empty Bottle** (see the Nightlife chapter), a Ukrainian Village club that has expanded the musical palate of its alternative rock regulars with an experimental jazz night. With a reputation as an adventurous presenter of international and local music, the not-for-profit **HotHouse** has brought eclectic musical life to the Loop since it reopened in 1998 in a spacious downtown location. You can practically make eye contact with singer-songwriters from the Austin–Nashville axis who appear onstage at **Schubas Tavern** (see the Nightlife chapter), a beautiful vintage Schlitz beerhall. You'll find a mix of folk, country, bluegrass, and other traditional forms at concerts at the **Old Town School of Folk Music,** the oldest training ground for folk music in the country. The school outgrew its original home in Lincoln Park, and in 1998 settled into larger quarters, a 1930s Art Deco library in the Lincoln Square neighborhood, now outfitted with an intimate, acoustically superb 420-seat auditorium.

(Children's programs continue at the original location at 909 W. Armitage Ave.) Fans of an alternativish breed of country music have created their own hip little scene around a former working-class hole-in-the-wall called **The Hideout.** Small and cozy and decorated with holiday lights and deer antlers, the unassuming place resembles a roadside Wisconsin honky-tonk. The place has a lively musical bill with such local favorites as country-jazz chanteuse Kelly Hogan.

Comedy tonight... Improvisational comedy has spawned a bit of a cottage industry in Chicago. Of course, tourist magnet **Second City** looms large over the burgeoning scene, with its comedy revues skewering local politics and pop culture, capped each night by improvised sketches. The show's format—sketch, blackout, sketch—had gone stale in recent years, until the company shook things up by hiring away some of the city's best improvisers and borrowing a few tricks from other improv groups. Training ground for funny folks like Mike Myers and the late Chris Farley, **ImprovOlympic** has energized the improv scene with long-form productions—wholesome, clean-cut 20-somethings taking improv workshops invent full-length plays from single audience suggestions. A newcomer to the Chicago comedy scene is the **Lincoln Lodge** stand-up and variety showcase, held each Friday night in the back room of the Lincoln Restaurant in west Lake View. As with any venue for emerging talent, you can never gauge whether or not it'll be worth the cover charge, so come prepared to either guffaw, chortle, chuckle, or heckle. In Old Town, **Zanies** reigns as the city's lone venue for professional stand-up comedy, hosting marquee-name comedians like Jackie Mason and Richard Lewis.

The spoken word... If you have a pen, a crisp cocktail napkin, and an urge to share your pain, you're ready to participate in the long-running Sunday-night "Poetry Slam" at **The Green Mill** (see the Nightlife chapter). The raucous evening features an open mike, followed by a competition pitting street poets against each other. Former champs have gone on to performance careers, but many in this democratic show go back to their drinks after the judges are through with them (sometimes it's not soon enough).

Guild Complex sponsors a weekly poetry performance every Wednesday in Wicker Park, as well as a wide range of readings and workshops. The auditorium at the **Museum of Contemporary Art** (see the Diversions chapter) is also a venue to watch for cutting-edge performance art.

Da sports... *Saturday Night Live* has made sure that Chicago will forever be linked in popular imagination with rib-eating, beer-guzzling, linguistically-challenged sports fans. Of course, come to think of it, in a lot of cases SNL wasn't too far off the mark. (Just try making your way through one of the bratwurst-and-Old-Style tailgate parties in Soldier Field's parking lot before a Bears game.) Nostalgia reigns for many Chicago sports fans, whether it's pining for the days when Michael Jordan played for the Bulls, or reminiscing about the 1986 Bears (far too many people in town still know all the words to the "Superbowl Shuffle" song). The thrill has been gone at the United Center since Mike hung up his Air Jordans, and a fresh bunch of **Chicago Bulls** have embarked on the arduous road to rebuilding. But, hey, for now we've still got our memories of those championship seasons at the **United Center,** the successor to the famously ear-splitting Chicago Stadium, which now rests in stadium heaven along with the old Comiskey Park, former home of the **Chicago White Sox** baseball team. Now in a new mall-like stadium, called **U.S. Cellular Field** ("Sox Park" to locals), the Sox traditionally attract blue-collar, South Side, and south-suburban fans. But the park rarely sells out, so the Sox use incentives like Saturday-night fireworks and Monday-night half-price tickets to attract more families. Sox fans tend to be hard-core baseball lovers, who often deride the North Side's **Chicago Cubs** as a yuppie team. But the Cubs and **Wrigley Field,** one of baseball's oldest parks, occupy a special place in people's hearts, not only in Chicago but all over the country (thanks to cable-transmitted WGN-TV). The lovable losers haven't made it to the World Series since before the Second World War (and even then they lost the Series), but ducking work to sit in the bleachers for an afternoon game is a summer ritual (as is buying tickets from scalpers, since every game is pretty much sold out by early March). Wrigley's ivy-covered outfield and manually

operated scoreboard are throwbacks to baseball as it used to be—back when the late and much-missed Harry Caray, longtime "voice of the Cubs," was just a cub himself. While baseball divides the city, football brings it together: The city was pretty much unified in its disgust with the design of the "new" **Soldier Field,** home of the **Chicago Bears** (it looks like a spaceship landed in the middle of a Greek temple). Still, no-one's complaining about the brand-new bathrooms and expanded food options. It's been a few years since he led the team, but Mike Ditka, the prototype for the SNL gag, still retains the moniker "Da Coach." You practically have to inherit Bears season tickets these days, and most games are sold out (single tickets go on sale, and get snapped up, in early summer). If you must see the Bears, prepare to use a broker or a scalper, or pack a parka for a frigid late-season game when saner fans stay home by the TV. And then there is the cult of **Chicago Blackhawks** hockey fans—hard-working people, from factory workers to CEOs—who, with their impassioned vocalizing, made the old Chicago Stadium a death-defyingly loud place for visiting teams. The larger United Center has diluted things a bit, but you should still observe three rules at a Blackhawks game: 1) Hate the long-time owners, the Wirtz family, and never, never forgive them for trading away Bobby Hull more than two decades ago; 2) When the players set up for a power play, shout "SHOOT! SHOOT!" at the top of your lungs; and 3) No matter how much the team sucks, stick by the hard-working players, knowing that you love hockey and no one else in town really cares. Soccer has always been heralded as the next big thing, but you'd still surprise many Chicagoans if you told them they have a professional soccer team. The cutely named **Chicago Fire,** which began playing at Soldier Field in 1998, even took home the league championship in its rookie season.

Map 19: The Loop Entertainment

ENTERTAINMENT

Auditorium Theatre **8**
Chicago Bears **11**
Chicago Civic Orchestra **7**
Chicago Opera Theater **4**
Chicago Symphony Orchestra **7**
Chicago Theatre **3**
Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago **10**
Ford Center for the Performing Arts/ Oriental Theatre **2**
Goodman Theatre **1**
Grant Park Music Festival **4**
Harris Theater for Music and Dance **4**
HotHouse **9**
Hubbard Street Dance Chicago **4**
Joffrey Ballet of Chicago **8**
Lyric Opera of Chicago **5**
Muntu Dance Theater of Chicago **4**
Orchestra Hall **7**
Shubert Theatre **6**
Symphony Center **7**

The Index

About Face Theatre (p. 204) LAKE VIEW A company dedicated to gay-themed drama—original works, adaptations, and revivals.... *Tel 773/784-8565. www.aboutfacetheatre.com. Offices at 1222 W. Wilson Ave, performances at various theaters around town. Tickets $12–$20.*

Auditorium Theatre (p. 203) THE LOOP The original home of the symphony and the opera, Adler and Sullivan's 4,000-seat masterpiece (it probably has the finest acoustics in the city) now showcases a variety of dance, music, and theater performances.... *Tel 312/902-1500 (Ticketmaster Arts Line). www.auditoriumtheatre.org. 50 E. Congress Pkwy., at Michigan Ave. Harrison el stop (Red Line). Tickets $15–$70.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Bailiwick Repertory (p. 204) LAKE VIEW The stage lights rarely go dark in the complex's three theater spaces, with a constant stream of adventurous plays.... *Tel 773/883-1090. www.bailiwick.org. 1229 W. Belmont Ave., at Racine Ave. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). Tickets $15–$40.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Chicago Bears (p. 211) THE LOOP Season tickets passed down through the generations have contributed to years of sold-out games at Soldier Field. If you miss the early summer offering of single tickets, your best bets are going through a ticket broker, showing up at the game hoping to find a few (scalped) extras, or packing a parka for a frigid late-season game when saner fans stay home by the TV.... *Tel 847/295-6600. www.chicagobears.com. Soldier Field, Lake Shore Dr. and 16th St. Roosevelt el stop (Red Line). Tickets $45–$300. Aug–Dec.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.
See Map 19 on p. 212.

Chicago Blackhawks (p. 211) WEST LOOP Having finally seen the team make the playoffs in 2002 after a prolonged absence, Chicagoans keep hoping for better things from their NHL squad. However, the team still has a long way to go to replicate the glory

days of Bobby Hull and Stan Mikita. To fit in like a local at a game, cheer throughout the National Anthem and periodically scream out, "DETROIT SUCKS!".... *Tel 312/455-7000 (offices). www.chicagoblackhawks.com. United Center, 1901 W. Madison, between Damen Ave. and Wood St. Bus 20; take a cab at night. Tickets $15–$100. Oct–June.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Chicago Bulls **(p. 210)** WEST LOOP The team formerly known as princes. Look on the bright side: At least now you can lay your hands on some tickets.... *Tel 312/559-1212 (Ticketmaster) or 312/455-4000 (administrative offices). www.nba.com/Bulls. United Center, 1901 W. Madison St., between Damen Ave. and Wood St. Bus 20, take a cab at night. Tickets $10–$85. Oct–June.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Chicago Civic Orchestra **(p. 205)** THE LOOP This training body of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performs in frequent, sold-out concerts at Orchestra Hall. Tickets are free, but must be reserved for a small handling fee in advance.... *Tel 800/223-7114 or 312/294-3807. 220 S. Michigan Ave., between Adams and Jackson sts. Jackson el stop (Red Line). Sept–June.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Chicago Cubs **(p. 210)** LAKE VIEW They've pretty much been in a slump for the last half-century, but no matter—the bleachers are filled every game, day or night, with fans drawn by Wrigley Field's ivy-covered outfield and hand-operated scoreboard.... *Tel 800/347-CUBS (outside Illinois) or 773/404-CUBS (Ticketmaster). www.chicagocubs.com. Wrigley Field, 1060 W. Addison St., between Clark St. and Sheffield Ave. Addison el stop (Red Line). Tickets $14–$50. Apr–Oct.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Chicago Fire **(p. 211)** THE LOOP The city's pro soccer team.... *Tel 888-MLS-FIRE or 312/559-1212 (Ticketmaster). www.chicagofire.com. Soldier Field, Lake Shore Dr. and 16th St. Roosevelt el stop (Red Line). Tickets $15–$40. Apr–Sept.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Chicago Opera Theater **(p. 206)** THE LOOP Opera for the rest of us. This company emphasizes American performers and composers and uses a midsize theater with the goal of making the genre inviting to the non-black-tie crowd.... *Tel 312/704-8414. www.chicagooperatheater.org. Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St., between Michigan Ave. and Columbus Dr. Washington el stop (Red Line) or Randolph el stop (Brown Line). Tickets $30–$97. Performances in Feb, March, May only.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater (p. 203) NAVY PIER The Bard is all this acclaimed company does. Luckily, it does it well.... *Tel 312/595-5600. www.chicagoshakes.com. 800 E. Grand Ave. at Navy Pier. Grand el stop (Red Line), then transfer to free trolleys or CTA buses. Tickets $40–$62.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra (p. 205) THE LOOP This top-ranked orchestra has a devoted audience that follows it from its town home at the Symphony Center to its summer residence at north-suburban Ravinia. Students and seniors get a discount.... *Tel 312/294-3000 (800/223-7114). www.cso.org. 220 S. Michigan Ave., between Adams and Jackson sts. Jackson el stop (Red Line). Tickets $25–$100 ($190 box seats). Sept–June (Orchestra Hall); June–Sept (Ravinia).*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Chicago Theatre (p. 202) THE LOOP This is a restored 4,000-seat house whose bright "Chicago" marquee has become a city icon. You never know what you're going to see here—music, comedy, even the occasional fashion show.... *Tel 312/902-1500 (Ticketmaster) or 312/443-1130 (administrative offices). 175 N. State St., between Randoph and Lake sts. Washington el stop (Red Line) or Randolph el stop (Brown Line). Tickets $25–$75.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Chicago White Sox (p. 210) SOUTH SIDE The city's South Side team has played consistently better than the Cubs over the years, but even Saturday night fireworks can't compete with the devotion Chicagoans hold for the crosstown ball club. That said, Sox fans show up to watch the game, so it's beside the point that they've been saddled with a soulless ballpark.... *Tel 312/831-1769 (Ticketmaster) or 312/674-1000 (administrative office). www.chisox.com. U.S. Cellular Field, 333 W. 35th St., Sox/35th St. el stop (Red Line). Tickets $12–$45. Apr–Oct.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Court Theatre (p. 203) HYDE PARK Affiliated with the University of Chicago, this respected theater embraces classic French literature, Shakespeare, and other highbrow stuff in its five-show season.... *Tel 773/753-4472. www.courttheatre.org. 5535 S. Ellis Ave., at 55th St. Metra train to 57th St. and Lake Park Dr. stop. Tickets $25–$50. Sept–May.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago (p. 207) THE LOOP This hub for modern dance in the city keeps a busy schedule.... *Tel 312/344-8300. www.dancecenter.org. 1306 S. Michigan Ave., at 13th St. Roosevelt el stop (Red Line). Tickets $10–$25. Sept–May.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.
See Map 19 on p. 212.

ETA Creative Arts Foundation (p. 204) SOUTH SIDE This highly regarded African-American company stages serious drama in its 200-seat theater.... *Tel 773/752-3955. www.etacreativearts.org. 7558 S. Chicago Ave., between 75th and 76th sts. Take a cab. Tickets $25.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Ford Center for the Performing Arts/Oriental Theatre (p. 203) THE LOOP This fantastic, 2,000-seat former movie palace has been splendidly restored as a Broadway musical venue.... *Tel 312/902-1400 (Ticketmaster) or 312/782-2004. 24 W. Randolph St., between State and Dearborn sts. Washington el stop (Red Line) or Randolph el stop (Brown Line). Tickets $40–$75.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Goodman Theatre (p. 202) THE LOOP Chicago's most respected, dependable theater company presents world premieres, revivals, and shows that have generated buzz in New York and London. Whatever you see here is guaranteed to be well-acted, since the Goodman draws the best performers in town. Half-price day-of-performance tickets at noon for matinees and 6pm for evening shows.... *Tel 312/443-3800. www.goodman-theatre.org. 170 N. Dearborn St., between Randolph and Lake sts. Washington el stop (Red Line) or State/Lake el stop (Brown Line). Tickets $30–$50.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Grant Park Music Festival (p. 205) THE LOOP The Chicago Park District's free summer concert festival. Concerts are Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings.... *Tel 312/742-4763. www.grantparkmusicfestival.com. Pritzker Music Pavilion in Millennium Park, Randolph St. between Michigan Ave. and Columbus Dr. Washington el stop (Red Line) or Randolph el stop (Brown Line). June–Aug.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Guild Complex (p. 210) WICKER PARK This not-for-profit literary organization hosts poetry readings, open-mike nights, and writing workshops.... *Tel 773/227-6117. www.guildcomplex.com. Chopin Theater, 1543 W. Division St., at Milwaukee Ave. Division el stop (Blue Line). Tickets $5–$7.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Harris Theater for Music and Dance (p. 206) THE LOOP Finally, Chicago's dance troupes have a home. The stark concrete lobby isn't exactly welcoming, but the stadium seating inside gives everyone a great view.... *Tel 312/334-7777. www.madtchi.com. 205 E. Randolph Dr., between Michigan Ave. and Columbus Dr. Washington el stop (Red Line) or Randolph el stop (Brown Line).*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

The Hideout (p. 209) WICKER PARK No Shania's or Garths allowed: This left-of-center country clubhouse is a welcome alternative to Nashville business-as-usual.... *Tel 773/227-4433. www.hideoutchicago.com. 1354 W. Wabansia Ave., at Willow St. Damen el stop (Blue Line), then a short cab ride. Tickets $5–$10.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

HotHouse (p. 208) THE LOOP This downtown venue features an eclectic brew of local and world music in an 8,000-square-foot downtown loft.... *Tel 312/362-9707. www.hothouse.net. 31 E. Balbo Ave., between State St. and Wabash Ave. Harrison el stop (Red Line). Tickets $10–$20.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

House of Blues (p. 207) RIVER NORTH The Chicago flagship of the chain is anchored by a gilded music hall, plus a restaurant, hotel, and, of course, a gift shop. Excellent all-you-can-eat brunch with live gospel music on Sundays ($38 adults, $15 children 6–12).... *Tel 312/923-2000 or 312/559-1212 (Ticketmaster). www.hob.com. 329 N. Dearborn St., between Kinzie Ave. and the Chicago River. Grand el stop (Red Line). Tickets $20–$35.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago (p. 207) THE LOOP One of the only companies in the country to perform Twyla Tharp's pieces, the city's premiere dance troupe, founded in 1978, is based at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance.... *Tel 312/902-1500 (Ticketmaster) or 312/850-9744 (administrative offices). Offices at 1147 W. Jackson Blvd. www.hubbardstreetdance.org. Tickets $20–$50. Apr–May.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

ImprovOlympic (p. 209) LAKE VIEW This theater hosts Chicago's top improvisers together on Monday nights, and shows of competing teams the rest of the week.... *Tel 773/880-0199. www.improvolympic.com. 3541 N. Clark St., at Addison St. Addison el stop (Red Line). Tickets $5–$14.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Joffrey Ballet of Chicago (p. 207) THE LOOP This 33-dancer classical ballet troupe incorporates members of the former New York company with a few dancers stolen from Ballet Chicago. Performances are at the Auditorium Theatre and other large downtown venues.... *Tel 312/739-0120. www.joffrey.com. Offices at 70 E. Lake St., Suite 1300. Tickets $15–$80.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Lincoln Lodge (p. 209) LAKE VIEW Homegrown comedy performed in the back room of a restaurant. Shows here can be hit-or-miss: You never know if you're going to catch the next big standup comedy star, or be more enthralled by your beer stein (roughly

the size of a Cadillac) than anything on stage.... *Tel 773/296-4029. www.thelincolnlodge.com. 4008 N. Lincoln Ave., at Irving Park Ave. Irving Park el stop (Brown Line). Tickets $7 (with 1-drink minimum).*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Links Hall **(p. 207)** LAKE VIEW This intimate second-floor studio is a popular venue for modern dance, experimental choreography, and performance art.... *Tel 773/281-0824. 3435 N. Sheffield Ave., at Newport Ave. Addison el stop (Red Line). Tickets $10–$15.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Lookingglass Theatre Company **(p. 203)** MAGNIFICENT MILE Original, highly physical, intellectually curious theater is performed in three big shows a year at a variety of venues. There are a limited number of $10 tickets available before performances.... *Tel 312/337-0665. www.lookingglasstheatre.org. 821 N. Michigan Ave., at Pearson St. Chicago el stop (Red Line). Tickets $30–$50. Sept–May.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Lyric Opera of Chicago **(p. 206)** THE LOOP A-list singers, spectacular sets, and the regal Civic Opera House make the Lyric one of the toughest-to-find tickets in town. Check with the box office for turned-back tickets the day of performance.... *Tel 312/332-2244. www.lyricopera.com. 20 N. Wacker Dr., at Madison St. Randolph/Wells el stop (Brown Line). Tickets $29–$139. Sept–March.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Metro **(p. 208)** LAKE VIEW A Chicago institution, this sturdy old theater can be crowded, sweaty, and smoky when you pack in throngs of alterative-rock fans. Save on Ticketmaster fees by buying advance tickets at the club's box office in the adjacent record shop (no phone orders). Popular shows sell out quickly.... *Tel 773/549-0203. www.metrochicago.com. 3730 N. Clark St., at Waveland Ave. Addison el stop (Red Line). Tickets $10–$20.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Muntu Dance Theater of Chicago **(p. 207)** THE LOOP This energetic company brings to life stories of the African and African-American experience with dance and music, both ancient and modern. Concerts in December and April/May at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance (see above); other times of year, the company performs at other smaller venues throughout the city.... *Tel 773/602-1135. Office at 6800 S. Wentworth Ave. Tickets $20–$30.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Neo-Futurists **(p. 204)** ANDERSONVILLE Located above a funeral home, this theater group offers both a never-ending hit show, plus experimental new stuff. They don't take reservations for the 11:30pm performance, so show up at least an hour early to

guarantee a seat.... *Tel 773/275-5255. www.neofuturists.org. 5153 N. Ashland Ave., at Foster St. Berwyn el stop (Red Line). Tickets $6–$11. Fri–Sun.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Old Town School of Folk Music **(p. 208)** LINCOLN SQUARE This long-established school has welcomed all the major players, from Peter Seeger to Alison Krauss. The offerings now also embrace jazz, world, Native American, Celtic, Latin, and Cajun music.... *Tel 773/728-6000. www.oldtownschool.org. 4544 N. Lincoln Ave., between Wilson and Montrose aves. Western el stop (Brown Line). Tickets $10–$25.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Orchestra Hall See Symphony Center, below.

Park West **(p. 208)** LINCOLN PARK Intimate nightclub graced with good sightlines and acoustics. Call ahead to reserve a table (for an extra charge).... *Tel 773/929-1322. 322 W. Armitage Ave., between Clark St. and Lincoln Ave. Bus 22 or 151. Tickets $15–$27.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Ravinia Park **(p. 205)** NORTH SUBURBS This tree-covered music idyll is a romantic spot to relax on the lawn on a summer evening when there are performances that include everything from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to pop acts and old-time favorites such as Tony Bennett. Rent a pair of lawn chairs and a side table and pick up a boxed meal at the well-stocked concession area.... *Tel 847/266-5100. www.ravinia.com. Lake-Cook and Green Bay Roads, Highland Park; Metra train to Ravinia Park stop. $10 for lawn seating, $20–50 for seats in the covered pavilion. June–Sept.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Redmoon Theater **(p. 204)** WEST LOOP Masks and puppets of all shapes and sizes are the tools of this one-of-a-kind theater company's trade. Performers pop up everywhere from city parks to museum auditoriums. Call them or go online for more information.... *Tel 312/850-8440. www.redmoon.org. Office at 1438 W. Kinzie St. Tickets $18–$22.*

River North Chicago Dance Company **(p. 207)** RIVER NORTH Performing at various venues, this 14-member jazz-oriented company gives a lot of local artists a shot at choreographing.... *Tel 312/944-2888. www.rivernorthchicago.com. Offices at 1016 N. Dearborn Pkwy. Tickets $25–$45. Oct–May.*

Scrap Mettle SOUL (p. 204) UPTOWN Formed in 1994, this unique theater troupe is dedicated to sharing the stories and experiences of those in the community through theatrical performances. A diverse mix of professionals, amateurs, and the mentally, physically, and financially challenged, the performers explore the power of the theater at its most basic level with performances at various community centers around Chicago.... *Tel 773/275-3999. www.scrapmettlesoul.org. Offices at 4707 N. Broadway. Tickets $5–$10.*

Second City (p. 209) OLD TOWN A local institution that's been a launching pad for comedic careers from Ed Asner to Gilda Radner to SNL's Tina Fey, all the shows here are based on improv comedy, so come prepared to shout out suggestions, and you might well see your idea come to life on stage.... *Tel 312/337-3992. www.secondcity.com. 1616 N. Wells St., at North Ave. Sedgwick el stop. Tickets $17–$19.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Shubert Theatre (p. 203) THE LOOP This grand, 2,000-seat theater keeps a busy schedule of Broadway-style crowd-pleasers, from Rent to Peter Pan. Avoid the second balcony and some obstructed seats.... *Tel 312/902-1500 (Ticketmaster). 22 W. Monroe St., between State and Dearborn sts. Monroe el stop (Red Line). Tickets $15–$68.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Skyline Stage (p. 207) NAVY PIER Part of the Navy Pier entertainment megalopolis, this open-air hall hosts a variety of fun summer concerts.... *Tel 312/559-1212 (Ticketmaster). www.navypier.com. 800 E. Grand Ave., at Navy Pier. Grand el stop (Red Line), then transfer to free trolleys or CTA buses. Tickets $20–$75.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Steppenwolf Theatre Company (p. 202) OLD TOWN Seriously grown up after years as an itinerant young company, the city's acclaimed off-Loop theater operates from a rather austere Lincoln Park compound containing a 500-seat mainstage and upstairs studio space.... *Tel 312/335-1650. www.steppenwolf.org. 1650 N. Halsted St., at North Ave. North/Clybourn el stop (Red Line). Tickets $35–$55 mainstage; $18–$27 studio.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Symphony Center (p. 205) THE LOOP A combination of mostly classical and jazz music concerts play here. Its centerpiece is Orchestra Hall, a sublime 1905 hall designed by Daniel Burnham that is home to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Civic Orchestra, and visiting jazz, classical, and chamber artists.... *Tel 312/294-3000. 220 S. Michigan Ave., between Adams and Jackson sts. Jackson el stop (Red Line). Tickets $15–$90.*

See Map 19 on p. 212.

Tweeter Center (p. 207) WEST SUBURBS Well, at least you're outside. The view from the pavilion seats isn't all that bad; the cheaper grass plots in back offer close-ups of teenagers making out while big-name rockers take the stage.... *Tel 708/614-1616. www.tweetercenter.com/chicago. 19100 S. Ridgeland Ave., Tinley Park. No public transportation options: Take a cab. Tickets $15–$50. May–Sept.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

U.S. Cellular Field See Chicago White Sox, above.

United Center See Chicago Bulls, above.

The Vic (p. 208) LAKE VIEW When it's not showcasing the latest rock shows, this somewhat dilapidated second-run movie theater takes on a *Mystery Science Theater 3000* vibe as the local Brew 'n' View, where you can down pitchers of beer during the show. $5 gets you three movies and lots of opportunities to yell at the screen.... *Tel 773/472-0449 or 773/929-6713 for movie listings. www.victheatre.com. 3145 N. Sheffield Ave., at Belmont Ave. Belmont el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). Tickets $20–$35 for concerts.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Victory Gardens (p. 203) LINCOLN PARK Crowd-pleasing and respectable, this Lincoln Park theater commissions local playwrights and has the wherewithal to bring in some big-name talent (e.g., Julie Harris).... *Tel 773/871-3000. www.victorygardens.org. 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., at Belden Ave. Fullerton el stop (Red Line or Brown Line). Tickets $30–$35.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

Wrigley Field See Chicago Cubs, above.

Zanies (p. 209) OLD TOWN Big-name talent and suburbanites' birthday parties fill the room at this comedy club, which hits you with a standard two-drink minimum in addition to the ticket price.... *Tel 312/337-4027. www.chicago.zanies.com. 1548 N. Wells St., between North Ave. and Schiller St. Sedgwick el stop (Brown Line). Tickets $18–$24.*

See Map 18 on p. 198.

HOTLINES & OTHER BASICS

Airports... **O'Hare Airport,** as everybody knows, is the world's busiest airport. And though technically located in the city of Chicago, it's actually 17 miles northwest of the Loop, tethered to the city by a narrow corridor of land. Much of the airport has been refurbished since it was originally built, or totally built anew in recent years. The international terminal is a high-tech addition; the United terminal, designed by Helmut Jahn, has a great light show and an eerie sound system that makes you feel like you're on your way to Pluto, even if you're just heading to Dayton. The city's other airport is **Midway Airport,** 10 miles southwest of the Loop, off the Stephenson Expressway on South Cicero Avenue. In some ways it's more convenient to deal with than O'Hare, and it's serviced by a lot of smaller (and cheaper) airlines. Find info on both airports at www.chicagoairports.com.

Airport transport to downtown... While both airports are jammed with cabs vying for your business, Chicago is blessed with a subway system that allows travelers to get to and from both O'Hare and Midway for only $1.75 (a cab

from O'Hare to downtown will run about $35, including a $1 surcharge, while from downtown to Midway it can cost up to $30).

From O'Hare, the O'Hare/Congress/Douglas line runs 24 hours a day and transports you directly through the northwest side of the city and into the Loop. (If you're heading to Lincoln Park, Lake View, or another neighborhood, you can get off at any point along the way and take a bus or cab either east toward the lake or west away from it; just make sure you get a transfer for an extra 30¢ when you pay your fare at O'Hare.) The trip can take about a half hour, but it's still faster than any other mode of transport—especially during rush hour. At O'Hare, follow the signs that look like the front of a subway car to get to the station.

The Orange Line runs from Midway right into the Loop; the ride is quick (about 20 minutes), but beware if you have a lot of luggage: It's a long walk from the terminal to the train stop, and there are no moving sidewalks as there are at O'Hare.

Other modes of transportation include **Continental Airport Express** (Tel 312/454-7799; www.airportexpress.com), which offers door-to-door bus service from either airport to most downtown hotels. From O'Hare it costs $21, or $39 round-trip; from Midway it's $16, $30 round-trip (you get a decent discount if two or more people book at the same time). In addition, all the major car rental agencies are available at both airports, with courtesy buses running between the terminals and lots.

Babysitters... In the mood to dump the kids and trip the night fantastic? Many of the top hotels work with **American ChildCare Service** (Tel 312/644-7300), a state-licensed and insured babysitting service that can match you with a sitter. The sitters are required to pass background checks, provide multiple child-care references, and be trained in infant and child CPR. It's best to make a reservation 24 hours in advance; the office is open from 9am to 5pm. Rates are $17 per hour, with a 4-hour minimum, and a $10 flat fee for transportation.

Buses... The **Chicago Transit Authority** (www.transitchicago.com) operates more than 100 bus routes in the city; the fare is $1.75. You can either pay as you board (but

the drivers won't make change) or use a farecard that you've purchased at any el station (see "Subways," later in this chapter). Transfers cost 30¢ extra and must be used within 2 hours of purchase; they must be purchased as you board the bus—the drivers are sticklers about this and no amount of whining will get them to back down. There's generally a bus stop every other block along each individual route, marked by a blue-and-white sign illustrating the route itself. If it says there's "night owl service," that route runs 24 hours. Many don't, though, so always check (and frankly, for safety's sake, you probably shouldn't ride the buses late at night anyhow).

Business Hours... Shops generally keep normal business hours, 10am to 6pm Monday through Saturday. Most stores stay open late at least 1 evening a week. Certain businesses, such as bookstores, are almost always open during the evening hours all week. Most shops (other than in the Loop) are now open on Sunday as well, usually from noon to 5pm. Malls are generally open to 7pm and on Sunday as well. Banking hours in Chicago are normally from 9am (8am, in some cases) to 5pm Monday through Friday, with select banks remaining open later on specified afternoons and evenings.

Car rental... All major car rental agencies are represented in Chicago, with outlets throughout the city and at both airports. Prices vary widely, so inquire in advance. And take note, the city of Chicago levies an 18% tax on car rentals. Call for locations; here are the phone numbers: **Alamo** (Tel 800/327-9633); **Avis** (Tel 800/230-4898); **Budget** (Tel 800/527-0700); **Dollar** (Tel 800/800-4000); **Hertz** (Tel 800/654-3131); **National** (Tel 800/227-7368); and **Thrifty** (Tel 800/367-2277).

Chicago Office of Tourism... This office (Tel 877/CHICAGO; www.ci.chi.il.us/tourism.) runs visitor information centers at the **Chicago Cultural Center,** 77 E. Randolph St., at Michigan Avenue, open Monday through Friday from 10am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 5pm, and Sunday 11am to 5pm; and at the **Water Tower Pumping Station,** 163 E. Pearson St., at North Michigan Avenue, open daily 7:30am to 7pm.

The Best Chicago Websites

These Chicago-based sites provide up-to-date listings on everything from restaurants to blues clubs, as well as valuable links to other sites:

- ***www.metromix.com** is the* Chicago Tribune*'s entertainment-oriented site.*
- ***www.cityofchicago.org/Landmarks/index.html** is a city website that includes definitions of Chicago architectural styles, tour information, and maps.*
- ***www.chireader.com** is the site of the* Chicago Reader, *the city's alternative weekly paper.*
- ***www.chicago.citysearch.com** offers reviews of restaurants, bars, shows, and shops.*
- ***www.centerstage.net** provides entertainment reviews.*
- *Many of the city's performing arts groups sell tickets online through **www.ticketweb.com**, so you can reserve seats before leaving home.*
- *Two good general sites are **www.cityofchicago/exploringchicago** (Chicago Office of Tourism) and **www.enjoyillinois.com** (Illinois Bureau of Tourism).*

Chicago Park District... For information, try Tel 312/747-2200 or www.chicagoparkdistrict.com.

Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)... Call the CTA (Tel 312/836-7000) for information on how to take the subway from where you are to where you want to go. You can also check out route maps online at www.transitchicago.com.

Children's Emergency Services... Internationally recognized as one of the finest children's hospitals in the country, **Children's Memorial Hospital** (Tel 773/880-4000; www.childrensmemorial.org; Fullerton and Lincoln aves.) operates the city's only emergency room geared toward children.

Convention centers... McCormick Place (Tel 312/791-7000; www.mccormickplace.com; 2301 S. Lake Shore Dr.) is one of the biggest and most important convention complexes in the country; it has 112 meeting rooms and more than 2.2 million square feet of exhibition space.

Dentists... The 24-hour referral service of the **Chicago Dental Society** (Tel 630/978-5745) can refer you to an

area dentist. Your hotel concierge or desk staff may also keep a list of dentists.

Doctors... In the event of a medical emergency, your best bet — unless you have friends who can recommend a doctor — is to rely on your hotel physician or go to the nearest hospital emergency room. The **Chicago Medical Society** (Tel 312/670-2550; www.cmsdocs.org) makes free referrals weekdays, 8:30am to 4:30pm. **Northwestern Memorial Hospital** also has a **Physician Referral Service** (Tel 877/926-4664). Also see "Hospitals" below.

El... see "Subways," later in this chapter.

Emergencies... Most Chicago hospitals have 24-hour emergency rooms. Call 911 for ambulance, paramedics, and police, or to report a fire or an animal bite. This is a free call. **Northwestern Memorial Hospital** (Tel 312/926-2000; www.nmh.org; 251 E. Huron St.), generally considered the best emergency room in the city, is near many Magnificent Mile hotels. Other vital numbers: **Children's Memorial Hospital Emergency Room** (Tel 773/880-4000) and **Poison Control** (Tel 800/222-1222).

Events hotlines... Desperate for something to do? Call the **City of Chicago Events Hotline** (Tel 312/744-3370); the **Chicago Dance and Music Alliance** (Tel 312/987-9296) for classical music and opera information; or visit the **League of Chicago Theatres**' website, www.chicagoplays.com to find out what shows are playing.

Festivals and special events...

All dates below are for 2005.

JANUARY: Frozen Midwesterners dream of warmer weather at the **Chicago Boat, Sports, and RV Show** (Tel 312/946-6200; McCormick Place, Jan 19–23).

FEBRUARY: Chinatown buzzes with energy during the **Chinese New Year Parade** (Tel 312/326-5320; Wentworth and Cermak aves., Feb 9); check out the newest cutting-edge concept cars at the **Chicago International Auto Show** (Tel 630/495-2282; McCormick Place, Feb 11–20); see top dogs strut their stuff at the **International Kennel Club of Chicago Dog Show** (Tel 773/237-5100; McCormick Place, Feb 25–28).

MARCH: Chicago's **St. Patrick's Day Parade,** the Saturday closest to March 17 (Dearborn St. at Wacker Dr.), is huge, raucous, and lots of fun (they even dye the river green!).

APRIL: Die-hard baseball fans get their tickets early for **Cubs Opening Day,** Wrigley Field (Tel 773/404-CUBS; see the Entertainment chapter), and **White Sox Opening Day** (Tel 312/674-1000; U.S. Cellular Field, formerly known as Comiskey Park; see the Entertainment chapter); gardeners get inspired at the **Spring and Easter Flower Show** (Tel 312/742-7736; Lincoln Park Conservatory, through mid-May).

MAY: **Buckingham Fountain Color Light Show,** a dazzling display at Grant Park's most famous fountain, May 1–Oct 1 (Grant Park at Congress St. and Lake Shore Dr.); the city's Mexican-Americans show their pride at the **Cinco de Mayo Parade** (Tel 312/744-3315; Cermack Ave. and Woods St., May 8); **Art 2005** (Tel 312/587-3300; Navy Pier, May 13–15), is a major art exposition that draws hundreds of galleries.

JUNE: The **Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade** (Tel 773/348-8243; Halsted St. at Belmont St., June 25) is like a giant party through the streets; the **Chicago Blues Festival** (Tel 312/744-3315; Petrillo Music Shell, Grant Park, June 9–12) showcases some of the very best musicians in the business; the **Old Town Art Fair** (Tel 312/337-1938; Lincoln Park W. at Orleans St., June 10–12) is fun for browsing (though usually very crowded); the **Puerto Rican Fest** (Tel 773/276-0200; Division St. at Sacramento Blvd., June 18) is one of the major Latino-American festivals of the summer; **Printer's Row Book Fair** (Tel 312/987-9896; Dearborn St. at Congress Pkwy., June 3–5) features seminars with well-known writers and booths from Chicago's best bookstores; the **Chicago Country Music Festival** (Tel 312/744-3315; Petrillo Music Shell, Grant Park, June 24–26) is a rockin' good time right on the lakefront.

JULY: The **Sheffield Garden Walk** (Tel 773/929-9255; Webster and Sheffield Aves., July 16–17) lets you peek at private gardens in Lincoln Park; the massive **Taste of Chicago** (Tel 312/744-3315; Grant Park, June 24–July 4) brings hoards of people downtown to sample dishes from local restaurants; the city's **Fourth of July Celebration** (Grant Park, July 3) features a live concert and fabulous fireworks—along with huge crowds; on **Venetian Night** (Tel

312/744-3315; Monroe Harbor, July 30), brightly-lit boats sail along the lakefront in an aquatic parade.

AUGUST: **Bud Billiken Parade,** the largest African-American parade in the country, celebrates the beginning of the school year (Tel 312/225-2400; 39th St. and King Dr., Aug 13); the **Air and Water Show** (Tel 312/744-3315; North Ave. Beach, Aug 20–21) includes jaw-dropping aerial stunts and flyovers from groups like the Blue Angels; **Northalsted Market Days** (Tel 773/868-3010, Aug 6–7) is a popular street festival in the heart of Chicago's gay neighborhood; the **"Viva! Chicago" Latin Music Festival** (Tel 312/744-3315; Petrillo Music Shell, Grant Park, Aug 26–28) is pretty much guaranteed to get your toes tapping.

SEPTEMBER: The **Chicago Jazz Festival** (Tel 312/744-3315; Petrillo Music Shell, Grant Park, Sept 2–4) is a downtown musical festival for grownups; the **Mexican Independence Day Parade** (Tel 312/744-3315; Dearborn St. from Wacker to Van Buren, Sept 18) celebrates the city's large Mexican population.

OCTOBER: Runners from all over compete in the **Chicago Marathon** (Tel 312/904-9800; starts in Grant Park and runs throughout the city, Oct 9); get a first look at the world's best independent films at the **Chicago International Film Festival** (Tel 312/425-9400, Oct 6–20).

NOVEMBER: **Chicago Humanities Festival,** a series of lectures and performances by noted writers, critics, and artists, is held at locations throughout the city (Tel 312/661-1028; www.chfestival.org, Nov 3–13); the holiday lights along Chicago's main shopping streets get switched on during the **Magnificent Mile Lights Festival** (Tel 312/642-3570; Michigan Ave. from Oak St. to the Chicago River, Nov 19); the city's official tree comes aglow at the **Christmas Tree Lighting** (Tel 312/744-3315; Daley Plaza, the Loop, Nov 25).

DECEMBER: The **Christmas Flower Show** (Tel 312/746-5100; Garfield Park Conservatory and Tel 312/742-7736; Lincoln Park Conservatory, Nov 25–Jan 8) adds a burst of color to the wintry landscape.

Finding an address... Chicago is laid out in a **grid system,** with the streets neatly lined up. Easing movement through the city are a half-dozen or so major diagonal thoroughfares.

Point zero is located at the downtown intersection of State and Madison streets. **State Street** divides east and west addresses, and **Madison Street** divides north and south addresses. From here, Chicago's highly predictable addressing system begins. Making use of this grid, it is relatively easy to plot the distance in miles between any two points in the city.

Virtually all of Chicago's principal north-south and east-west arteries are spaced by increments of 400 in the addressing system — regardless of the number of smaller streets nestled between them. And each addition or subtraction of 400 numbers to an address is equivalent to a half mile. Thus, starting at point zero on Madison Street and traveling north along State Street for 1 mile, you will come to 800 N. State St., which intersects Chicago Avenue. Continue uptown for another half mile and you arrive at the 1200 block of North State Street at Division Street. And so it goes, right to the city line, with suburban Evanston located at the 7600 block north, 9½ miles from point zero.

The same rule applies when you're traveling south, or east to west. Thus, heading west from State Street along Madison Street, Halsted Street — at 800 W. Madison St. — is a mile's distance, while Racine Avenue, at the 1200 block of West Madison Street, is 1½ miles from the center. Madison Street then continues westward to Chicago's boundary with the nearby suburb of Oak Park along Austin Avenue, which, at 6000 W. Madison, is approximately 7½ miles from point zero.

The key to understanding the grid is that the side of any square formed by the principal avenues represents a distance of half a mile in any direction. Understanding how Chicago's grid system works is of particular importance to those visitors who want to do a lot of walking in the city's many neighborhoods and who want to plot in advance the distances involved in trekking from one locale to another.

The other convenient aspect of the grid is that every major road uses the same numerical system. In other words, the cross street (Division St.) at 1200 N. Lake Shore Dr. is the same as at 1200 N. Clark St. and 1200 N. LaSalle St.

Gay guys and lesbians... Important local organizations include **Horizons Anti-Violence** (Tel 773/871-CARE),

Horizons Legal Services (Tel 773/929-4357), and **Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund** (Tel 312/663-4413). The center of gay nightlife is "Boys' Town," which runs roughly from Belmont Avenue north to Irving Park Road, and from Halsted Street east to the lake. Many of the stores and restaurants in this area carry the gay weeklies *Chicago Free Press* and *Windy City Times,* which cover local news and entertainment. You can also find out what's going on in town by stopping at Unabridged Books (Tel 773/883-9119; 3251 N. Broadway).

Hearing-impaired services... **City of Chicago Events Hotline** TDD number for the hearing impaired (Tel 312/744-8599).

Hospitals... The best hospital emergency room in Chicago is, by consensus, at **Northwestern Memorial Hospital,** 251 E. Huron St. (Tel 312/926-2000; www.nmh.org), a state-of-the-art medical center right off North Michigan Avenue. The emergency department (Tel 312/926-5188 or 312/944-2358 for TDD access) is located at 251 E. Erie St. near Fairbanks Court. For an ambulance, dial Tel 911.

Internet Access... Most Chicago **hotels** (especially downtown) have business centers with computers available for guests' use. Computers with Internet access are also available to the public at the **Harold Washington Library Center,** 400 S. State St. (Tel 312/747-4300) and at the Internet cafe inside the **Apple** computer store, 679 N. Michigan Ave. (Tel 312/981-4104).

Laundry... There are no public laundromats in the Loop or Michigan Avenue/River North neighborhoods (most hotels there have some kind of laundry facilities). The closest laundromat to downtown is the well-maintained **Sudz Coin Laundry**, 1246 N. Ashland Ave., near the intersection of Division St. and Milwaukee Ave. (Tel 773/218-9630; www.sudzlaundry.com; Division el stop on the Blue Line). It's open daily from 5am to midnight, with the last wash allowed at 10:30pm.

Liquor laws and drinking hours... Chicago's drinking age is 21, and bars and nightclubs card practically everyone. The bar universe is divided into two constellations: bars

with 2am licenses, which allow the taps to flow until 2am every night except Saturday nights/Sunday mornings, when they're open until 3am, and those late-night destinations with 4am licenses, which stay until 4am every night except Saturday nights/Sunday mornings, when they're open until 5am.

Newspapers and magazines... The big kahuna is the *Chicago Tribune* (www.chicagotribune.com). The "Friday" section is good for nightlife and entertainment listings. The *Chicago Sun-Times* (www.suntimes.com) has equally good Friday listings and, since it's a tabloid, is easier to read on the el. Both have a fairly conservative political slant, and both have launched competing "younger" versions of their papers that stress attitude and humor over content (the *Tribune* publishes *Red Eye,* the *Sun-Times* puts out *Red Streak;* they sell for 25¢). The *Chicago Reader* (www.chicagoreader.com), which comes out on Thursdays, has the city's most comprehensive nightlife listings; it's available, free, at bookstores and other stores throughout the North Side. Another freebie, *New City* (www.newcitychicago.com), is a terrific blend of service information, listings, reviews, and in-your-face journalism. *Chicago* magazine (www.chicagomag.com) carries pages of restaurant reviews every month; though its reviewers don't dish the restaurants as much as merely list the dishes, they still hold a lot of sway among the foodie cognoscenti. The magazine's also a good resource for dozens of theater reviews, gallery listings, and special events. For the Muffies and Chads amongst you, go to *CS* (formerly *Chicago Social*) for complete listings of benefits, black-tie galas, and fashion shows, not to mention the best big-bucks real estate ads in the city.

Parking... If you're willing to pay for it, there is parking galore in Chicago. The main city-owned lots, where the rates are comparatively low ($12 for each 24-hour period), are all located underneath Grant Park; privately owned lots are sprinkled throughout the city. The big city lots include the **East Monroe Street** and **Millennium Park** garages (enter at Columbus Dr. and Monroe St.; Tel 312/742-7644); **Grant Park South** (enter at Michigan Ave. between Van Buren and Adams sts.; Tel 312/745-2862); and **Grant Park North** garage (enter at Michigan Ave. between Madison and

Museums for Less

If you're planning on visiting lots of Chicago museums, you should invest in a CityPass, a prepaid ticket that gets you into the biggest attractions (The Art Institute, Field Museum of Natural History, Shedd Aquarium, Adler Planetarium, Museum of Science and Industry, and Hancock Observatory). The cost at press time was $49 for adults and $39 for children, which is about 50% cheaper than paying all the museums' individual admission fees. You can buy a CityPass at any of the museums listed above, or purchase one online before you get to town (www.citypass.net). Also, see the "Museum Free Days" box, on p. 93, for schedules of when some of these museums are free.

Randolph sts.; Tel 312/742-7530). Private lots (where $12 may not even buy you an hour) include **Midcontinental Parking Garage** (Tel 312/986-6821; 55 E. Monroe St.), **Navy Pier Parking** (Tel 312/595-7437; 600 E. Grand Ave.); and **Soldier Field** (Tel 312/747-1285; 14th St. and Lake Shore Dr.), and numerous high-rise lots throughout the Loop and off of Michigan Avenue.

Pharmacies... **Walgreens** has more than 100 branches throughout the city, with 17 of them open 24 hours a day. The 24-hour branch at 757 N. Michigan Ave. (Tel 312/644-4000) holds claim to being one of the world's busiest pharmacies, for whatever that's worth. Another big chain, **Osco** (Tel 800/654-6726), has a number of 24-hour branches, too.

Post Office... The main post office is at 433 W. Harrison St. (Tel 312/983-8182); free parking is available. You also find convenient branches in the Sears Tower, the Federal Center Plaza at 211 S. Clark St., the James R. Thompson Center at 100 W. Randolph St., and a couple of blocks off the Magnificent Mile at 227 E. Ontario St.

Pro sports... The big names in town are the **Chicago Bears** football team (Tel 847/615-2327; www.chicagobears.com); the **Chicago Blackhawks** hockey team (Tel 312/455-4500; www.chicagoblackhawks.com); the **Chicago Bulls** basketball team (Tel 312/455-4000; www.nba.com/bulls); the **Chicago Cubs** (Tel 773/404-CUBS; http://chicago.cubs.mlb.com) and the **Chicago White Sox** (Tel 312/674-1000; http://chicago.whitesox.mlb.com) for baseball. For more details on these teams, see the Entertainment chapter.

Radio stations... **WBEZ** (91.5 FM) is the local National Public Radio station, which plays jazz in the evenings. **WFMT** (98.7 FM) specializes in fine arts and classical music. **WXRT** (93.1 FM) is a progressive rock station whose DJs mix things up with shots of blues, jazz, and local music. On the AM side of the dial, you'll find talk radio on **WGN** (720) and **WLS** (890). News junkies should tune to **WBBM** (780) for nonstop news, traffic, and weather reports, and sports fans will find company on the talk station **WSCR** (1160).

Restrooms... Try department stores, from **Marshall Field's** to **Neiman Marcus,** even **Crate & Barrel,** on Michigan Avenue, or scout out the bathrooms off the lobbies of any of the downtown hotels. There are public restrooms near the tourist information booths at the **Water Tower Pumping Station,** at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Pearson Street, and at the **Chicago Cultural Center,** 77 E. Randolph St., at the corner of Michigan Avenue.

Safety... Chicago has all the crime problems of any urban center, so use your common sense and stay cautious and alert. At night you might want to stick to well-lighted streets along the Magnificent Mile, River North, Gold Coast, and Lincoln Park, which are all high-traffic areas late into the night. Don't walk alone at night, and avoid wandering down dark residential streets, even those that seem perfectly safe. Muggings can — and do — happen anywhere.

After dark, you might want to avoid neighborhoods such as Hyde Park, Wicker Park (beyond the busy intersection of Milwaukee, Damen, and North aves.), and Pilsen, which border areas with more troublesome reputations. You can also ask your hotel concierge or an agent at the tourist visitor center about the safety of a particular area.

The El is generally quite safe, even at night, although some of the downtown stations can feel eerily deserted late in the evening. Buses are a safe option, too, especially nos. 146 and 151, which pick up along North Michigan Avenue and State Street and connect to the North Side via Lincoln Park.

Blue-and-white police cars are a common sight, and officers also patrol by bicycle downtown and along the

lakefront and by horseback at special events and parades. There are police stations in busy nightlife areas, such as the 18th District station at Chicago Avenue and LaSalle Street in River North and the 24th District station (known as Town Hall) at Addison and Halsted streets.

Subways... Four subway lines are operated by the **Chicago Transit Authority (CTA),** though the entire system, whether below ground or above, is generally referred to as the "el." Most trains run 24 hours a day, though some stations are closed at night and some routes run limited hours on Sundays. The city claims the trains run every 5 to 15 minutes, and that's probably true during the morning and evening rush hours, but at other times the wait can be a drag. Fortunately, many of the outdoor el platforms have heat lamps that actually work, a real lifesaver in winter. You must use a fare card to ride the system—buy them at any station. Most stations are unstaffed. Fare cards are currently $1.75, with a 30¢ transfer available if you want to switch to any bus route (the transfer must be used within 2 hours). There are reduced fares for children under 11 and seniors over 65. Call the surprisingly useful **CTA hotline** (Tel 312/836-7000) for information on how to get from where you are to where you want to go.

Taxes... Chicago sales tax is 8.75% on everything but groceries and prescription drugs, for which there is, thankfully, no tax at all. Restaurants in the central part of the city, roughly the 312 area code, are taxed an additional 1%, for a total of 9.75%. The hotel room tax is a steep 14.9%.

Ticket to Ride

*Visitors may consider buying a **Visitor Pass,** which works like a fare card and allows individual users unlimited rides on the El and CTA buses over a 24-hour period. The cards cost $5 and are sold at airports, hotels, museums, Hot Tix outlets, transportation hubs, and Chicago Office of Tourism visitor information centers (you can also buy them in advance online at www.transitchicago.com or by calling Tel 888/YOUR-CTA). Also available now are 2-, 3-, and 5-day passes. While the passes save you the trouble of feeding the fare machines yourself, remember that they're economical only if you plan to make at least three distinct trips at least 2 or more hours apart (remember that you get two additional transfers for an additional 25¢ on a regular fare).*

Taxis... A necessary evil, Chicago taxis are often dirty, unpleasantly aromatic, and driven by men and women who neither know the city well nor care to learn. It's not unheard of to get in a cab, give your destination, and have the driver ask you for directions. Supposedly, a light on the top of a cab indicates that the cab is available, but lit cabs zoom by with riders all the time. The farther you go away from the Loop and the Michigan Avenue area, the more difficult it becomes to get a cab. In some neighborhoods, you simply have to phone ahead; try **Flash Cab** (Tel 773/561-1444), **Yellow Cab** (Tel 312/TAXICAB), or **Checker Cab** (Tel 312/CHECKER). Currently, cab rates are fixed at $1.90 as the meter starts, $1.60 for each additional mile. There's a surcharge (or rip-off, depending on your attitude) of 50¢ for each additional person in the cab.

Time Zone... All of Illinois, including Chicago, is located in the central time zone, 1 hour behind New York City and 2 hours ahead of Los Angeles.

Trains... Train service to Chicago's suburbs is fast and relatively convenient. **METRA** (Tel 312/836-7000; www.metrarail.com) operates commuter lines to almost all of them, departing from various stations in the city, including the **Northwestern Station** (Madison St. and Canal St.), **Union Station** (Adams St. and Canal St.), and **LaSalle Street Station** (LaSalle St. and Van Buren St.). The **METRA Electric** commutes to Hyde Park from the underground **Randolph Street Station** (Randolph St. and Michigan Ave.). **Amtrak** (Tel 800/USA-RAIL; www.amtrak.com) trains use grand old Union Station, which just happens to have a nifty children's playroom to help make long waits a little more bearable for train-traveling families.

Travelers with disabilities... For information, call the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (Tel 312/744-4016).

TV stations... The networks: CBS is channel 2, NBC is channel 5, and ABC is channel 7. Local stations: Chicagoland Television (local 24-hour news) is channel 10, Fox-WFLD

is channel 32, WGN is channel 9. The PBS affiliate, WTTW, is channel 11. For channel-surfers, the Chicago area is wired with the usual host of cable-TV options.

Visitor information... Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau (Tel 877/CHICAGO; www.chicago.il.org). Chicago Office of Tourism (Tel 312/744-2400).

Weather... The *Chicago Tribune* runs a full page of weather information every day in the Metro section; you can also check weather forecasts online at www.chicagotribune.com or www.weather.com. ***Beware:*** Chicago weather is notoriously unpredictable! You can go from wearing shorts to an overcoat in the same day. Come prepared for a range of temperatures (and learn to dress in layers).

Chicago's Average Temperatures & Precipitation

	High/Low °F	High/Low °C	Rainfall (in.)
Jan	20/14	–7/–10	1.60
Feb	34/18	1/–8	1.31
Mar	44/28	7/–2	2.59
Apr	59/39	15/4	3.66
May	70/48	21/9	3.15
June	79/58	26/14	4.08
July	85/63	29/17	3.63
Aug	82/62	28/17	3.53
Sept	76/54	24/12	3.35
Oct	64/42	18/6	2.28
Nov	48/31	9/–1	2.06
Dec	35/20	2/–7	2.10

GENERAL INDEX

Abbey Pub, 179, 187
About Face Theatre, 204, 213
Abraham Lincoln Bookstore, 154, 160
Accommodations, 14–43. *See also* Accommodations Index
Adler Planetarium, 96, 103, 121
Afternoon tea, 50
AIA Guide to Chicago, 104
Airports, 223–224
The Alley, 152, 160
All Our Children, 154, 160
Alta Vista Terrace, 109
Alternatives, 152, 160
American Girl Place, 115, 121
Andy's Jazz Club, 180, 187
Apartment Number 9, 152, 160
Archbishop's Residence, 91–92
Architectural highlights, 95, 104–108
Art galleries, 100–102
Art Institute of Chicago, 89, 91–93, 100, 121
Atmosphere, 182, 187
Auction house, 151
Auditorium Theatre, 203, 213

Baby Doll Polka Club, 184, 187
Babysitters, 224
Bailiwick Repertory, 204, 213
Bank One Plaza, 98
Barnes & Noble, 160
Barneys New York, 150, 156, 161
Bars, 179
  gay and lesbian, 181–182
  hotel, 182
  neighborhood, 182–184
  sports, 181
Base Bar, 182, 188
Batcolumn, 98
Beaches, 135–136
Belmont Harbor, 135
The Berghoff, bar at, 182
Berlin, 179, 182, 188
Bicycling, 137–138
Big Chicks, 181, 188
Big Wig, 178, 188
Bittersweet, 157, 161
Blake, 153, 161
Bloomingdale's, 147, 161
Blue Chicago, 180, 188
Blues, 180
Boating, 136
Boat tours, 97, 117, 136–137
Bookstores, 154
Bookworks, 154, 161
Borders, 161
Bottega Veneta, 150, 161
Bowling alleys, 112–113
Brookfield Zoo, 97, 98–99, 121–122
Buckingham Fountain, 90, 103, 122
Bucktown
  restaurants, 74, 75
  shopping, 160, 163, 167–169
Buddy Guy's Legends, 180, 188
Buses, 224–225
Business hours, 225

Calder, Alexander, 98
Canoeing, 136
Carl Fischer of Chicago, 150, 161
Car rentals, 225
Carson Pirie Scott & Co., 105, 106–107, 149, 162, 201
Chanel, 152, 156, 162
Charnley House, 92
Chicago (sculpture), 98
Chicago ArchiCenter Shop, 150, 162
Chicago Architecture Foundation, 90, 108, 116–117, 122, 137
Chicago Bears, 211, 213
Chicago Blackhawks, 211, 213–214
Chicago Board of Trade, 102, 122
Chicago Bulls, 210, 214
Chicago Children's Museum, 97, 122
Chicago Civic Orchestra, 205, 214
Chicago Comics, 154, 162
Chicago Cubs, 210, 214
Chicago Dance and Music Alliance, 200, 207, 227
Chicago Fire, 211, 214
Chicago Free Press, 200–201
Chicago Historical Society, 92, 122
Chicago magazine, 232
Chicago Marathon, 140
Chicago Opera Theater, 11, 206, 214
Chicago Place, 147
Chicago Reader, 176, 200, 232
Chicago Sailing Club, 136
Chicago Shakespeare Theater, 203, 215
Chicago Stock Exchange, 93
Chicago Sun-Times, 176, 232
Chicago Supernatural Tours, 117
Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 11, 205, 215
Chicago Theatre, 202, 215
Chicago Tribune, 176, 200, 232
Chicago Trolley Co., 117
Chicago White Sox, 116, 210, 215
Chicago Yacht Club, 136

Children in Paradise, 154, 162
Chinatown, 111
  restaurants, 79
Circuit, 181, 188
CityPass, 91, 233
Clarke House, 108, 122–123
Classical music, 205–206
The Closet, 182, 189
Cole-Haan, 152, 162
Comedy clubs, 209
Coq d'Or, 177, 189
Corcoran's, 183, 189
Court Theatre, 203, 215
Crate & Barrel, 150, 151, 155, 162
Crate & Barrel Outlet Store, 155, 163
Crilly Court, 99
Crobar, 178, 189
Crown Hall, 113
Cru Cafe and Wine Bar, 184, 189
Cubby Bear, 181, 189

The Daisy Shop, 157, 163
Daley Plaza, 98
Damen Avenue, shopping on, 156
Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, 207, 215
Dance clubs, 178–179, 181
Dance companies, 206–207
Danny's Tavern, 178, 189
Dawn Shadow, 98
Delilah's, 178, 189
Dentists, 226–227
Dillinger, John, 115–116
Disabilities, travelers with, 236
Disgraceland, 156, 163
Diversey Driving Range, 138
Diversions, 86–129
Division Street, 179
Doctors, 227
Donald J. Pliner, 151, 163
Double Door, 179, 190
DuSable Museum of African American History, 94–95, 123

The El, 110
Elements, 155, 163
Embelezar, 163
Emergencies, 227
The Empty Bottle, 177–179, 190, 208
Encore, 182, 190
Entertainment, 198–221
  current listings, 200–201
  tickets, 201–202
Ermenegildo Zegna, 152, 163
ETA Creative Arts Foundation, 204, 216
Evanston-Lake Shore trail, 137–138
Events hotlines, 227
Excalibur, 179, 190

Families with children
  accommodations, 24
  emergency services, 226
  restaurants, 62–63
  shopping, 154
Federal Center, 98
Festivals and special events, 227–229
Field Museum of Natural History, 90, 93, 96, 97, 123
Filene's Basement, 151, 157, 163–164
Flamingo, 98
Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 203, 216
Foster Avenue Beach, 135
Fudge Pot, 157, 164
Funky Buddha Lounge, 178, 190

Gamekeepers, 181, 190
Gay and lesbian travelers, 114, 228
  information and resources, 230–231
  nightlife, 176, 179, 181, 200–201
  outdoor activities, 135, 140
Gentry, 181, 190
Ghost Bar, 183, 190
Ginger Man Tavern, 183, 191
Ginkgo Tree Book Shop, 154, 164
Giorgio Armani, 152, 156, 164
Glessner House, 108, 123
Glove Me Tender, 150, 164
Gold Coast, 80, 91–92
  accommodations, 18, 21, 32, 38
Golf, 138–139
Goodman Theatre, 202, 216
Goose Island Brewery, 184, 191
Grant Park, 132–134
Grant Park Music Festival, 205, 216
Grant Park Symphony and Chorus, 10–11
Greek Town, 111
Green Dolphin Street, 180, 191
The Green Mill, 181, 191, 209
Guild Complex, 210, 216

Hammacher Schlemmer, 152, 156, 164
H&M, 153, 164
Harold Washington Library Center, 102, 103, 123–124
Harpo Studios, 92
Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 206–207, 216
Harry's Velvet Room, 183, 191
Hawthorne Street, 109
Hearing-impaired services, 231
Hermès, 150, 164
The Hideout, 209, 217
Hi-Tops Café, 181, 191
Hollywood Beach, 136
Home-accessory shops, 155
Hot dogs, 59
Hotel bars, 182
HotHouse, 208, 217
Hot Rooms, 17
House of Blues, 207–208, 217

Hoy, 176, 200
Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, 207, 217
Hull House, 108, 124
The Hunt Club, 181, 191
Hutchinson Street, 109
Hyde Park, 113–114, 126
  accommodations, 39
  diversions, 123, 125–127, 129

Ice-skating, 139–140
Ikram, 153, 165
Illinois Institute of Technology, 107, 113, 124
ImprovOlympic, 209, 217
In-line skating, 139
International Museum of Surgical Science, 96–97, 124
Internet access, 231
Iwan Ries & Co., 149, 152, 165

Jackson Park, 133–134, 138
Jayson Home & Garden, 155, 165
Jazz, 180–181
Jazz Record Mart, 153, 165
Jazz Showcase, 180, 192
Jerry Springer show, 97
Joffrey Ballet of Chicago, 207, 217
John Barleycorn Memorial Pub, 183, 192
John Hancock Center, 106
  Observation Deck, 97, 104, 124
Jordan, Michael, 10

Kingston Mines, 180, 192
Kitty O'Shea's, 182, 192
Krivoy, 150, 153, 165

Lake Shore Drive, 90
Lake View, 114
  accommodations, 18, 22, 27, 38, 42–43
  entertainment, 213, 214, 217, 218, 221
  nightlife, 183, 187–194
  restaurants, 66, 73, 76, 77, 79
  shopping, 160–163, 167–171
Laundry, 231
Leslie Hindman, 151
Les Quatre Saisons, 98
Lincoln Lodge, 209, 217–218
Lincoln Park, 88, 102–103
  accommodations, 31, 32
  entertainment, 219–221
  nightlife, 183, 191–193, 195
  outdoor activities, 133–135, 138–139
  restaurants, 66, 76, 78, 82, 83
  shopping, 160, 161, 165, 167
  sights and attractions, 109, 114, 122, 124, 126
Lincoln Park Conservatory, 133
Lincoln Park Zoo, 97–99
Lincoln Square, 111
Links Hall, 207, 218
Liquor laws, 177, 231–232
Little Italy, 111
  restaurants, 76, 81
Little Saigon, 110–111
Lookingglass Theatre Company, 203, 218
The Loop, 8, 90
  accommodations, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 33–38, 40, 41
  diversions, 121–123, 127, 128
  entertainment, 213–218, 220
  nightlife, 182, 188, 190, 192
  restaurants, 67, 70, 72, 73, 75, 82
  shopping, 161–163, 165–168
Lori's Discount Designer Shoes, 152, 157, 165
Louis Sullivan Townhouses, 92
Lyric Opera of Chicago, 11, 206, 218

McCormick Place, 226
McFetridge Sports Center, 140
McShane's Exchange, 157, 166
Madison & Friends, 154, 165
Madison Plaza, 98
The Magnificent Mile, 8–9
  accommodations, 18, 31–42
  diversions, 121, 122, 124, 125
  nightlife, 187, 189–192, 194, 218
  restaurants, 58–59, 67, 68, 70–74, 76–82
  shopping, 146, 150, 160–170
Malls, 147–148
Manifesto, 155, 165–166
Marathon, Chicago, 140
Marilyn Miglin, 150, 166
Marquette Park, 110
Marshall Field's, 147, 149, 166
Merchandise Mart, 106, 124, 148
Metro, 179, 208, 218
Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, 95, 111, 125
Midway Airport, 223
Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig, 105, 107, 113
Millennium Park, 133, 139–140, 206
Monadnock Building, 104
Montrose Beach, 88
Monument with Standing Beast, 98
Movies, Chicago as setting for, 9, 21, 206
Multiple Choices, 155, 166
Muntu Dance Theater of Chicago, 207, 218
Museum of Contemporary Art, 91, 93, 94, 125
Museum of Science and Industry, 90, 91, 93, 95, 97, 125

Museums
ethnic, 94–95
free days, 93
Music stores, 153–154

Narcisse, 183, 192
National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum, 112, 125
Natural History, Field Museum of, 90, 93, 96, 97, 123
Navy Pier, entertainment at, 215, 220
N'Digo, 176, 200
Neiman Marcus, 153, 166
Neo-Futurists, 204, 218–219
Newberry Library, 102, 125
New City, 232
Newspapers and magazines, 232
Nightlife, 174–195. *See also* Entertainment
Nike Town, 155, 166
Nordstrom, 166
North Avenue Beach, 135
North Pier, 136
North Side
nightlife, 182–183
restaurant, 66–67
Northwestern University, 114

Oak Park, 91
attractions, 123, 126, 128
Oak Park Visitors Center, 108, 117, 126
Oak Street Beach, 88, 135
O'Hare Airport, 223
hotels near, 18, 34, 37, 40, 41
Oilily, 154, 166
Old Navy, 167
Old Town, 99–100
entertainment, 220, 221
nightlife, 183, 189, 191
restaurants, 68–70, 72, 73
shopping, 163–166, 169, 170
Old Town School of Folk Music, 208, 219
Opera, 206
Orchestra Hall, 205
Oriental Institute Museum, 94, 113, 126
Orientation, 88–89
Outdoor activities, 132–141

Pagoda Red, 167
Paper Source, 155, 167
Parking, 10, 232–233
Parks, 132–135
Park West, 208, 219
The Pedway, 8
Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, 96, 126
Petrillo Music Shell, 10, 132–133
P.45, 153, 156, 167
Pharmacies, 233
Pilsen, 111

Pizzerias, 55–56
Playboy Mansion, 91
Plaza Escada, 152, 167
Poetry performances, 209–210
Polish-Americans, 9
Polish Museum of America, 95, 111, 126
Pops for Champagne, 184, 192
Post office, 233
Powell's, 154, 167
Prairie Avenue Bookshop, 154, 167
Prairie Avenue Historic District, 108, 123, 126
Precipitation, average, 237
Pritzker Music Pavilion in Millennium Park, 11, 133
Pronounciation, 10

Radio stations, 234
Rainbo Club, 177, 192
Ravinia, 11
Ravinia Park, 205, 207, 219
Reckless Records, 153–154, 167–168
Red Dog, 178, 193
Redmoon Theater, 204, 219
Reliance Building, 105
Reservations, hotel, 17–18
Restaurants, 46–83. *See also* Restaurants Index
Restrooms, 11, 234
River North, 124
accommodations, 32–34, 37, 42
art galleries, 101–102
entertainment, 217, 219
nightlife, 188, 190, 192
restaurants, 58, 68–71, 74, 76–78, 80–82
shopping, 160, 165, 167–169
River North Chicago Dance Company, 207, 219
Robie House, 91, 94, 105, 107, 127
Rock music, 179
Rogers Park, 110
restaurant, 72
The Rookery Building, 104
Rosa's Lounge, 180, 193
Roscoe's Tavern, 181, 193
Running, 140
Rush Street, 179

Safety, 234–235
Saffron, 168
Sailboats, Inc., 136
St. Michael's church, 99–100, 127
Saks Fifth Avenue, 148, 168
Sales tax, 149
Salvage One, 151, 168
Sauce, 183, 193
Savvy Traveler, 157, 168
Sawbridge Studios, 155, 168
Schaller's Pump, 184, 193
Schubas Tavern, 183, 193, 208

Science museums, 95–96
Scrap Mettle SOUL, 204–205, 220
Sculptures, 98
Sears, 168
Sears Tower Skydeck, 97, 104, 127
Seasons Lounge, 177, 194
Second City, 100, 209, 220
2nd Hand Tunes, 153, 168
Shedd Aquarium, 96, 97, 127
Sheffield's Wine and Beer Garden, 183, 194
Shoes, 151–152
Shopping, 144–171
Shops at the Mart, 148
Shubert Theatre, 203, 220
Sidetrack, 181, 194
Sights and attractions. *See* Diversions
Signature Lounge, 177, 194
Skyline Stage, 207, 220
Sleigh rides, 140–141
Smart Museum of Art, 94, 113, 127
Social Security Administration Building, 98
Softball, 134–135
Soldier Field, 211, 233
South Loop
  diversions, 122–123, 125, 126
  restaurant, 80
Southport Lanes, 113, 128
South Side
  entertainment, 215, 216
  nightlife, 184, 187–188, 193
Special events and festivals, 227–229
Spectator sports, 210–211, 233
Spertus Museum of Judaica, 94, 97, 128
Sportmart, 156, 169
Sports bars, 181
Sports stores, 155–156
State of Illinois Building, 98
Statues, Lincoln Park, 134
Steppenwolf Theatre Company, 202, 220
Stitch, 169
Strange Cargo, 156, 169
Stuart Weitzman, 151, 169
Subways, 235
Sugar Magnolia, 153, 169
Sullivan, Louis, 2, 92, 105–107, 149, 203, 213
Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte, 89, 92–93
Sun King, 157, 169
Swedish-American Museum Center, 110, 128
Swimming, 138
Sydney Marovitz Course, 138
Symphony Center, 205, 220

Tabula Tua, 155, 169
Tangerine, 169
Taxes, 235
Taxis, 236
Temperatures, average, 237
Tender Buttons, 169
Tennis, 139
10pin, 112–113, 128
Theater, 204–205
Three Arts Club, 92
Tiffany & Co., 152, 170
Time zone, 236
Tod's, 151, 156, 170
Tour Black Chicago, 117
Tourist information, 225
Tours, 116–117
Trains, 236
Tweeter Center, 207, 221
The Twisted Spoke, 184, 194

Ultimo, 153, 170
Uncle Fun, 154, 170
Underground Wonder Bar, 180, 194
A Unique Presence, 155, 170
United Center, 210
Unity Temple, 108, 117, 126, 128
Universities, 113
University of Chicago, 103, 113, 129
The Untouchable Tour, 117
Uptown nightlife, 188, 191
U.S. Cellular Field, 116, 210

The Vic, 208, 221
Victory Gardens, 203, 221
Virgin Megastore, 153, 170
Volleyball, 135
Vosges Haut-Chocolat, 157, 170

Water Tower, 95, 106
Water Tower Place, 147
Waveland Golf Course, 114
WBEZ, 201
Websites, 226
Webster's Wine Bar, 184, 195
Westfield North Bridge, 148
West Loop
  entertainment, 213–214, 219
  restaurants, 68, 74, 75, 77, 78, 81, 83
Wicker Park
  entertainment, 216, 217
  nightlife, 188, 190, 192, 193
  restaurants, 69, 70, 75
Windsurfing, 140
Windward Sports, 156, 171
"Windy City," 7–8
Windy City Sports, 141
Winfrey, Oprah, 92, 97
Women and Children First, 154, 171
Wright, Frank Lloyd, 91, 94, 104, 105, 107, 126
  Home and Studio, 108, 123
Wrigley Building, 106
Wrigley Field, 106, 114, 210, 214, 228

Wrigleyville nightlife, 183, 191

Zanies, 209, 221
Zebra Lounge, 182, 195
Zoos, 98–99

Accommodations

Allerton Crowne Plaza, 27, 31
Arlington House, 28, 31
Best Western Hawthorne Terrace, 22–23, 32
Best Western River North Hotel, 22, 27, 32
Chicago Marriott, 25, 32
City Suites Hotel, 22, 27, 32
The Claridge, 21, 32–33
Crowne Plaza Chicago-The Silversmith, 23, 33
DoubleTree Guest Suites, 24–27, 33
The Drake, 19, 21, 33
Embassy Suites, 24, 25, 27, 28, 33
Embassy Suites Hotel O'Hare-Rosemont, 28, 34
The Fairmont Chicago, 20, 23, 26, 34
Fitzpatrick Chicago Hotel, 25, 34
Four Seasons Hotel, 19, 24, 27, 34
Hampton Inn & Suites, 24, 34–35
Hard Rock Hotel, 22, 35
Harris Family Hostel, 28, 35
Hilton Chicago, 19–20, 23, 25–27, 35
Holiday Inn Chicago City Centre, 24, 35–36
Hotel Allegro, 23, 36
Hotel Burnham, 23, 36
Hotel Inter-Continental Chicago, 27, 36
Hotel Monaco, 23, 36
Hotel 71, 22, 37
House of Blues Hotel, a Loews Hotel, 23, 37
Hyatt Regency Chicago, 25, 37
Hyatt Regency O'Hare, 26, 28, 37
Le Méridien, 24, 37–38
The Majestic Hotel, 22, 27, 38
Omni Ambassador East, 20, 21, 38
Omni Chicago Hotel, 25–27, 38
The Palmer House Hilton, 19, 26, 38
Park Hyatt, 19, 25, 39
Peninsula Chicago, 19, 24, 27, 39
Ramada Inn Lakeshore, 23, 39
Red Roof Inn, 27, 39
Renaissance Chicago Hotel, 20, 22, 26, 27, 40
The Ritz-Carlton, 18–19, 40
Sheraton Chicago, 21, 26, 40
Sheraton Gateway Suites, 28, 40
Sofitel Chicago O'Hare, 28, 41
Sofitel Chicago Water Tower, 22, 41
Swissôtel, 20, 25–27, 41
The Talbott Hotel, 20, 41
W Chicago City Center, 23, 41
W Chicago Lakeshore, 20–21, 23, 42
The Westin Chicago River North, 20, 22, 26, 27, 42
The Whitehall Hotel, 20, 24, 42
The Willows, 22, 27, 42–43

Restaurants

Ambria, 52, 56, 60, 66
Ann Sather, 49, 58, 60, 62, 66
Arun's, 61, 66
Atwood Café, 52, 63, 67
The Berghoff, 49, 54, 67
Bice, 50, 67
Billy Goat Tavern, 49, 67
Bin 36, 63, 68
Bistro 110, 54, 57, 58, 68
Bistrot Margot, 61, 63, 68
Blackbird, 50, 68
Bongo Room, 60, 69
Brasserie Jo, 57, 69
Café Ba-Ba-Reeba!, 54, 61, 63, 69
Café Iberico, 48, 53, 54, 69
Caffe de Luca, 156
Carson's, 49, 69–70
Charlie Trotter's, 48, 60, 61, 63, 70
Ed Debevic's, 62, 70
Everest, 60, 70
Feast, 54, 61, 70
Fluky's, 59
foodlife, 51, 59, 70–71
Frontera Grill, 48, 51, 58, 71
Gene & Georgetti, 48, 52, 71
Gibson's, 50, 51, 71
Gino's East, 55–56, 71
Gioco, 56, 72
Gold Coast Dogs, 59
Goose Island Brewing Company, 63, 72
The Greenhouse, 50
Heartland Café, 54, 62, 63, 72
Heaven on Seven, 53, 63, 72
The Italian Village, 55, 56, 63, 73
Johnny Rockets, 59, 73
Kamehachi, 53, 63, 73
La Creperie, 49, 54, 56, 73–74
La Sardine, 56, 74
Le Bouchon, 57, 74
Le Colonial, 54, 59, 74
Lou Malnati's Pizzeria, 55, 74
Lou Mitchell's, 60, 75
Marché, 49–50, 52, 75
Mas, 50, 75
Meritage Café and Wine Bar, 57, 75
Mia Francesca, 50, 51, 56, 76
Mity Nice Grill, 51, 59, 62, 76
MK, 58, 76
Mon Ami Gabi, 50, 54, 57, 76
Morton's, 52, 77
Moti Mahal Indian Restaurant, 53, 77
Moto, 60–61, 77

Murphy's Red Hots, 59
Nacional 27, 55, 77
North Pond, 58, 62, 78
Oak Tree, 59, 78
onesixty blue, 57, 60, 62, 78
Palm Court at The Drake, 50
Papagus Greek Taverna, 58, 78
Penang, 51, 53, 55, 62, 79
Penny's Noodle Shop, 53, 58, 79
The Phoenix Restaurant, 53, 55, 79
Pizzeria Due, 55, 79
Pizzeria Uno, 49, 55, 79–80
Portillo's, 59
Puck's at the MCA, 51, 54, 59, 80
The Pump Room, 48–49, 52, 80
Reza's, 54, 63, 80
Room 12, 60, 80
Rosebud, 56, 81
Russian Tea Time, 50
Scoozi!, 51, 81
Seasons Lounge, 50
Spiaggia, 48, 56, 60, 81
SushiSamba Rio, 52, 81
Sushi Wabi, 53, 81
Tizi Melloul, 58, 82
Toast, 60, 82
Trattoria No. 10, 56, 82
Tru, 48, 60, 61, 82–83
Wiener Circle, 55, 59, 83
Wishbone, 51, 58, 60, 83
Zealous, 61

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